The Dissertation Committee for Rob Alan Martinsen certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Speaking of Culture: The Tango of Cultural Sensitivity and Language Learning in a Study Abroad Context

Committee:

Zena Moore, Supervisor

Elaine K. Horwitz

Orlando Kelm

Thomas J. Garza

Carl Blyth

Speaking of Culture: The Tango of Cultural Sensitivity and Language Learning in a Study Abroad Context

by

Rob Alan Martinsen, B.A.; M.A.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all who open their personal borders to people of other languages and cultures.

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Speaking of Culture: The Tango of Cultural Sensitivity and Language Learning in a Study Abroad Context

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Rob Alan Martinsen, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: Zena Moore

Increasingly, government and educational institutions are turning to study abroad programs as one of the primary means of providing students with important cross-cultural and linguistic skills. However, because of constraints on time and financial resources most students participate in short term programs lasting approximately two months. Additionally, research regarding students' linguistic and cultural growth in study abroad shows that some students gain far more from their participation than others.

The purpose of this study was to examine the cultural and linguistic learning that takes place in short-term programs and discover some of the factors that predict students' growth while abroad. This study examined the relationship between important factors such as students' level of cultural sensitivity, students' relationship with their host family, motivation to learn the language, the amount of time students' spent interacting with native speakers, as well as students' oral language skills during a seven-week study

abroad program. Surveys were used to measure each of the variables except for students' oral language skills. To measure changes in oral skills, the researcher created an innovative instrument in which native speakers rated clips of student speech in the target language from before and after their time abroad.

As found in previous research, students varied greatly in the amount of progress made in oral language skills and cultural sensitivity while abroad. However, students generally demonstrated small, but significant improvements in their oral language skills, despite the brief nature of their program. Further, the instrument created to measure growth in oral language skills showed high reliability. Interestingly, students' level of cultural sensitivity prior to going abroad predicted changes in oral language skills. These results provide support for students' participation in short-term study abroad programs since students generally experience noticeable improvements in language skills. They also suggest that students who are more culturally sensitive may have an advantage in language learning during study abroad programs. These results could be helpful for administrators in determining who may benefit most from such programs and may suggest that helping students gain cultural sensitivity could also aid students' language learning.

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Chapter 1: Background and purpose of Study

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In universities across the United States, thousands of students dine daily at the table of university language classes. Grammatical explanations, verb conjugations and culture lessons are some of the staples of the linguistic menu. Some students find themselves partaking of the fare with little enthusiasm in the simple hope of completing the meal and being excused from the table with requisite language credits. Others savor each homework assignment and happily ask for seconds. Even so, most students will eventually leave the table without satisfying their hunger for meaningful proficiency. Hoping for a strict diet of authentic language and culture, many students and teachers turn to study abroad programs in order to make more meaningful gains.

Study abroad programs are often seen as an ideal way for students to be immersed in the target language and culture. It seems intuitive that students will become more proficient after participating in study abroad programs. Indeed, much of the research on study abroad demonstrates that students often experience gains in proficiency in the target language through their participation in these programs (see Brecht et al. 1993, Ginsberg, 1992, Freed, 1995b, Yager, 1998).

1.2 HISTORY OF STUDY ABROAD

Spending time abroad has probably always been thought of as an important means of learning a language and gaining a global perspective, but perhaps never more so than

in the current political climate. Recently, the attacks of 9/11 and other related events have revived discussions of the United State's need for individuals with the linguistic and cultural knowledge that study abroad is thought to provide. On one hand, such horrific events can cause concerns about safety for students abroad, while the global and cultural nature of the conflict highlights the utility of the kind of skills and knowledge that study abroad can provide. Statistics show that study abroad participation has increased approximately 20% since the attacks (Open Doors, 2005). In addition, the government recently committed to large-scale support for study abroad. A bi-partisan commission approved by congress and President Bush announced plans to increase the number of students traveling abroad each year from the current 190,000 to 1 million by providing millions of dollars of additional funding (Lincoln Commission, 2006).

During or following international political or military crises there has been a surge in support from government and educational institutions for the study of languages and cultures other than English in general and a similar increase in support and interest in study abroad. A prime example occurred during World War II when the U.S. government and military found themselves woefully lacking in necessary foreign language skills. During the war itself study abroad was for obvious reasons severely limited, but the military made great innovations to provide language training to its members and created the system, which eventually became one of the precursors to the ACTFL guidelines and OPI. After the war, participation in study abroad increased significantly. Prior to World War II, Freeman (1967) reports that there were three programs for undergraduate study abroad sponsored by U.S. universities. However, in the years after the war those numbers quickly increased. By 1950, there were six such

programs. By 1960, the number had jumped to 50 and by 1963, there were 108 study abroad programs sponsored by U.S. universities. The Vietnam War may also have impacted government support for study abroad. In 1979, a report commissioned by President Carter was released. This report, titled Strength through Wisdom: A critique of U.S. capability, made over seventy suggestions regarding study abroad and international exchanges. Although it is difficult to determine cause and effect, the Gulf War may also have prompted a rise in study abroad participation. From 1991, the year the war ended, to 2001, participation in study abroad more than doubled from approximately 70,000 to 160,000 (Open Doors, 2003).

1.3 Effectiveness of Study Abroad

However, increased support and interest in study abroad in the aftermath of major conflicts do not last indefinitely, which makes this an important time to conduct research which will seek to improve the effectiveness of study abroad. Previous research indicates that study abroad is indeed an effective means of improving language proficiency. For example, one of the first modern studies to note the impact of study abroad was that of John Carroll (1967). His frequently cited study measured the language skills of a large sample of students majoring in a variety of languages in universities across the U.S. He found that, regardless of the language being learned, the amount of time spent abroad was one of the factors most strongly associated with the skill level of the students. His findings gave students who had not studied abroad little hope of attaining high skill levels. He states, “Those who do not go abroad do not seem to be able to get very far in

their foreign language study, on the average, despite the ministrations of foreign language teachers."

While Carroll's results were promising, it is important to note, however, that important questions remain about the effectiveness of study abroad, particularly in terms of why some students learn more than others. It may be surprising for many to find that studying abroad does not always guarantee dramatic increases in language proficiency. Unlike Carroll, Dekeyser (1991) examined the speech of students with experience abroad to those with only classroom experience and found little difference between the two groups. One of the largest studies to examine study abroad programs found that approximately eighty percent of students of Russian who began their stay at level one according to the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) showed improvement after their semester abroad (Brecht, R. et al., 1993). Such gains are impressive and suggest the opportunity for increased learning while abroad. At the same time, these results also indicate that after spending an entire semester in Russia and taking several university-level Russian courses, twenty percent of students showed no sign of improvement, according to the OPI.

Another study examined differences between Canadian students who had traveled to participate in language programs in French-speaking areas as opposed to those whose study of French had been limited to programs at school. At grade 8, visits to French-speaking areas were correlated with higher listening comprehension scores. However, no differences in proficiency were apparent at grade 12 (Lapkin, S., Hart, D., & Swain, M., 1995). When pondering the time, personal expense and presumable effort involved in

traveling to a new and different area and adjusting to the culture and surroundings, one has to wonder what prevented some students from learning as much as others.

1.4 EXPLANATIONS FOR DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT IN STUDY ABROAD

Scholars have provided myriad explanations for why some students seem to progress more than others while abroad. Some point to faulty notions of how languages are learned. As one scholar stated, "The romantic subjective bent of American culture whispers to the young that tromping the streets of exotic cities equals learning (Engel as cited in Day, 1987)." Other authors have examined students' theories of language and language learning (Miller, & Ginsberg, 1995). They have found that what a student believes about language learning can play a large role in their experience abroad and that certain beliefs hinder or help their progress.

1.4.1 Explanations for differences in Achievement -Interaction

One of the most compelling explanations for why some students improve more than others during study abroad is the amount of interaction they actually experience in the target language. Brecht et al. (1993) examined the calendar diaries of a large group of students who spent a semester abroad studying Russian and found that one of the primary strategies responsible for large gains in proficiency was to spend time with a single person speaking only Russian. Students who went from a pre-program OPI score of 1 to a 1+ spent over 25% more time speaking exclusively in Russian than students who registered no gain on the OPI scale. Those who went from a 1 to a 2 spent over 45% more time speaking exclusively in Russian than the non-gainers. The data also shows

that those that moved from 1 to 2 on the Foreign Language Institute scale spent 40% more time with a single Russian friend than those who showed no improvement. These results lend strong support to the intuitive notion that interacting with native speakers is extremely important in improving language skills while abroad.

Given the importance of social interactions with native speakers, one would hope that all students abroad would seek out and take advantage of such opportunities. Sadly, this is not the case. One study found that two thirds of the 76 students polled believed that they had not put as much effort into speaking with Russians outside of the class as they might have, despite their pre-program intentions (Pellegrino, 1996 qtd. in Pellegrino, 1998). If interacting with native speakers is so helpful, understanding what prevents students from having such interactions could have a powerful impact on the effectiveness of study abroad programs.

1.4.2 Explanations for differences in Achievement – Cultural Sensitivity

One plausible explanation for why students do not interact extensively with native speakers abroad is that some students lack cultural sensitivity which can lead to conflict or misunderstanding and impede students' ability to interact with native speakers and build close relationships. Wilkinson (1998a) examined the experience of two students participating in a home-stay program in France who had very different experiences. She partially explained the differences in students' experiences as being due to varying levels of cultural sensitivity. She explained that students who were more culturally sensitive were more able to adapt to the new cultural environment, thus allowing prolonged engagement with native speakers that in turn would lead to greater language learning. Students who were less culturally sensitive erected defensive barriers with broad

generalizations, such as “the French are so obstinate”, which led to decreased interaction and supposedly less language learning. Wilkinson concludes that the more culturally sensitive a student was the more likely s/he would be to overcome cultural differences, interact with native speakers of the target language and improve their language skills.

Another study found that cultural sensitivity was an obstacle for North American students in Costa Rica. Twombly (1995) found evidence that students’ cultural sensitivity played a large role in preventing students from interacting with native Spanish speakers during study abroad. She found that cultural norms in Costa Rica were difficult for the students to understand and adapt to. Students generally had difficulty making friends with Costa Ricans and spent much more time with other North American students. This study found that cultural practices, such as piropos, where men in public places will make somewhat poetic remarks about women’s looks, were especially difficult for students to deal with. Some of the female North American students responded by wearing a walk-man in public or using other avoidance tactics. Students identified other cultural differences between the study abroad participants and Costa Rican students as one reason that making friends was so difficult. For example, the female participants found that the somewhat more traditional roles of women in Costa Rica made it difficult to relate to the Costa Rican students. Similar to Wilkinson’s conclusion regarding North American students in France, Twombly concluded that cultural difficulties were one of the key factors in preventing students from making friends among members of the Costa Rican host culture consequently limiting students’ interaction in the target language and impeding students’ linguistic progress.

Twombly and Wilkinson's' conclusions are important for several reasons. First, if students' lack of cultural sensitivity does in fact prevent interaction with the host culture and impede language learning, then it seems likely that helping students to gain cultural sensitivity would increase language learning. However, only one study at present has looked at cultural attitudes and directly examined students' language ability. Yager's (1998) research examined the experience of study abroad students in Mexico and found that improvement in students' attitudes towards Mexicans was strongly related to improvement in language skills. The previously mentioned studies by Twombly and Wilkinson claim that lack of cultural sensitivity hinders interaction and therefore impedes language learning. However, they did not examine students' language skills as part of the research. Their research did examine cultural difficulties empirically and noted the resulting lack of interactions, but they can only assume that these difficulties resulted in reduced language learning because they do not include an examination of students' skills. This creates a need for empirical studies that would document cultural sensitivity or the lack thereof, in study abroad participants, as well as in students' language development. Such studies would allow the field to understand more clearly the relationship between cultural sensitivity and language learning abroad. Cultural factors, however, are only one of many factors that could explain differences in learning outcomes during study abroad. The setting in which students live, the length of time that students are abroad and even students' motivation can play an important role.

1.4.3 Explanations for differences in Achievement – Living Arrangements

One of the main selling points of study abroad is that students will be surrounded by the language and culture and enjoy a true immersion experience (Day, 1987). As those who are familiar with study abroad know, this is not always the case. Students may reside with others who speak their native language, alone or with a family who views the arrangement as simply leasing a room and providing board. Home stay is sometimes thought to be preferable to staying in a dorm because it is thought that students will have more opportunity for interaction than in a dorm or other setting where other non-native speakers may reside. However, little research has been dedicated to distinguishing the benefits of either, and some research suggests the importance of the relationship that students may or may not develop with the host families (Rivers, 1998). Being placed with a family that understands and supports the students' efforts to learn the target language could dramatically increase participants' opportunities for improvement, while an inattentive family that does not support students' efforts could have a negative impact on learning.

1.4.4 Explanations for differences in Achievement – Length of Stay

In addition, some authors have found that length of stay is an important factor in both cultural and linguistic learning while abroad (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004, Dwyer, 2004). As mentioned previously, participation in study abroad is growing rapidly, but most of the growth has come in the form of short-term study programs. So called "January abroad", "Maymester" or "Summer abroad" programs typically take students abroad for less than a semester. Such programs allow many students to participate who otherwise would not be able to, and are responsible in large part for the increased

popularity of study abroad. Participants in these types of programs make up a staggering 56% of the total number of students who go abroad from the United States (Open Doors, 2005). At present, the majority of research involving study abroad has focused on semester or year-long programs. This raises important questions. If students in semester or year-abroad programs do not always improve their language skills as much as hoped, one has to ask how much progress a student could reasonably expect to make in their understanding of language and culture during shorter programs.

1.4.5 Explanations for differences in Achievement – Motivation

Another important variable in language learning is student motivation. Day (1987) reflects on his experiences directing and teaching in study abroad programs, and states that students may not achieve as much as hoped while abroad because they "overestimate their level of motivation to put forth the effort required or underestimate the effort itself." Masgoret and Gardner (2003) found that among the individual variables measured, motivation seemed to have the strongest correlation with achievement in the language. It seems likely then that motivation would play a role in language learning in study abroad contexts as well. Yet, very few studies have looked at the role of motivation in study abroad and few have looked for a relationship between motivation and language achievement in a study abroad setting (Yager, 1998, Coleman, 1995).

1.5 PURPOSE/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research on study abroad indicates that students experience a variety of learning outcomes as a result of their experience abroad. However, there are few explanations for why some students seem to progress more than others through their

participation. In addition, several variables that are uniquely important in the study abroad context remain to be explored. These variables include cultural sensitivity, motivation, students' relationship with their host family and interaction with native speakers in the target language.

The research cited thus far makes a strong case for the notion that students who go abroad can be limited in the amount of language that they learn because of their lack of cultural sensitivity. However, only one piece of research in the study abroad literature has empirically examined the relationship between the changes that students experience in their language skills and students' cultural sensitivity. Cultural sensitivity seems particularly relevant since students who go abroad must deal in a very direct way with cultural differences. A student's motivation is also widely known to play a role in second language acquisition, but its relationship to language and culture learning in a study abroad setting has not been researched. Additionally, the effects of short-term study abroad programs and other variables such as the nature of the home stay arrangement have not been examined thoroughly. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to attempt to discover the relationship between such variables in short-term study abroad programs. Specific questions will include:

RQ 1. What changes do students experience in terms of cultural sensitivity during short-term study abroad?

RQ 2. What changes do students experience in their oral language skills during short-term study abroad?

RQ 3. What changes do students experience in motivational intensity during their study abroad program?

RQ 4. What is the relationship between changes in students' cultural sensitivity and changes in students' oral language skills during their time abroad?

RQ 5. Does interaction with native speakers predict changes in motivational intensity in study abroad participants?

RQ 6. Which of the following variables, cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and initial language level; predict interaction in the target language with native speakers?

RQ 7. Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity, oral language skills, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in oral language skills?

RQ 8. Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of motivation and oral language skills, students' relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in cultural sensitivity?

Understanding the answers to these questions will allow teachers and students of foreign languages, as well as program planners to make informed decisions about how best to meet student and program goals in study abroad settings. These questions will also be of value in deepening understanding of second language and culture learning in study abroad, as well as other settings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Traveling abroad has often been thought of as the most effective way to gain high levels of proficiency in a foreign language. Because of the holistic nature of learning in study abroad, research in this area draws on the literature of many related fields. Most of this work has accumulated since the middle of the twentieth century and includes second language acquisition, international education, cross-cultural studies and even anthropology. Therefore, a full review of all literature that could be relevant to study abroad would be outside the scope of this project. This paper will limit itself to reviewing the following topics that are particularly relevant to the purposes of this study: the benefits of study abroad as a context for learning foreign languages, factors that predict success in study abroad; cultural learning abroad and connections between language and culture learning abroad. While these categories are used to clarify and organize, it is important to recognize that language learning in general and perhaps especially language learning abroad can involve a multitude of factors that blend and interact with one another.

2.2 Study Abroad as a Context for Learning

The context in which second language learning takes place is considered an important variable in second language acquisition (SLA) research. As Dell Hymes (1972, qtd. in Collentine and Freed, 2004) suggested, in order to understand language in context we must "systematically relate the two [language and context]." Firth and Wagner (1997) also contend that social and contextual factors are vital to understanding

second language acquisition. Many studies have attempted to determine the benefits of study abroad as a context for language learning especially as it compares to other contexts such as classroom or domestic immersion programs (Lapkin, Hart, & Swain, 1995, Freed, 1995, Lafford, 1995). In summarizing this literature, Freed (1995) states that students often experience great benefits from study abroad participation, both linguistically and culturally, but laments that there remains a lack of consensus regarding the linguistic benefits of study abroad as opposed to other learning contexts.

The lack of consensus reported by Freed can be seen in the contrasting results of the following studies. Segalowitz and Freed (2004) compared the oral fluency and oral proficiency of English-speaking students who studied Spanish at their home university for a semester to the oral fluency and proficiency of those who traveled to Spain for the same amount of time. Oral fluency was measured using variables such as speech rate and length of utterance and oral proficiency was measured using the Oral Proficiency Interview. Students in both locations were tested before and after their semester of study. The study found that students in the abroad group experienced significantly more improvement in oral fluency and proficiency than the at-home group.

However, students who study abroad do not necessarily have an advantage in all aspects of speaking. Diaz (2004) examined various aspects of students' pronunciation. He asked students to read aloud certain passages in Spanish both before and after a semester spent either at home or abroad. The read-aloud procedure was used because it provided a standard measure and would ensure that certain token sounds would be included in the sample. Interestingly, the students who remained at home for a semester experienced more improvement than students who went abroad. Diaz found that other

variables such as years of formal language instruction were more related to accurate pronunciation than having spent a semester abroad.

Another study examined the differences between classroom-based learners and study abroad students' use of communicative strategies after a semester of instruction. Lafford (2004) found that both the classroom-based learners and the study abroad learners decreased their use of communicative strategies, but that the study abroad students decreased their usage even more than the classroom group. These results seem to indicate an advantage for the study abroad context, since Lafford claims that as intermediate students' proficiency increases their use of communicative strategies tends to decrease because they are more able to rely on their linguistic skills to communicate. However, there could be other explanations for why the study abroad group would decrease their usage more. Lafford suggests that during study abroad students have more interactions with native speakers that accomplish a real communicative need. This encourages students to focus more on meaning while conversing, and thus fewer communicative strategies are used.

Research on the long-term effects of studying a language abroad is likewise inconsistent. As mentioned previously, Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1995) measured the listening skills of Canadian students of French at eighth grade and then again in the twelfth grade. During eighth grade, participation in a study abroad program was significantly related to greater listening comprehension. However, by the twelfth grade the listening comprehension scores of students who had participated in a study abroad program were no higher than those who had not. This could be due to many factors, but

it does show that simply participating in a study abroad program does not guarantee more learning.

A study by Freed, Segalowitz and Dewey (2004) may shed some light on these somewhat inconsistent findings. Their study built on previous work by Freed (1995), which looked at students' improvement in their fluency in spoken French after instruction abroad and at home. In addition to these settings, this study also included students who had participated in a domestic immersion program. Students in each group received an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) both before and after the program. The interviews were then analyzed to determine the differences between before and after their time abroad in such variables as length of utterance, rate of speech and total number of words spoken. Of the three groups, the immersion group registered the most improvement, with the study abroad group also experiencing gains and the classroom only group demonstrating no improvement according to the measures used. The researchers also found that the immersion group used the target language much more regularly in out-of-class activities than the study abroad group. The study abroad group even reported using English more than the target language during their activities outside of class. The immersion group also reported its total time spent using French per week was much higher than either the study abroad or classroom groups.

This study, in the context of the previously mentioned studies, seems to indicate that the context of learning may not be as responsible for learning as teachers and researchers tend to think. Instead, the quality and quantity of interactions and the amount of time and vigor that students apply to their learning seem to be as much a part of their learning as where their learning takes place. Students in a study abroad environment

often have a rich supply of opportunities to interact in the target language in meaningful ways. However, the idea that simply being abroad equates to having such opportunities and taking advantage of them does not appear to be true.

This may be due in part to the variety of settings in which study abroad takes place. Due to its global nature, study abroad programs may be designed with nearly limitless combinations of locations and living arrangements. For example, students who wish to accelerate their Spanish learning may find themselves in Madrid sharing a room in a dormitory with other students from their own country or in a small village in Peru with a local family. Because of the wide range of programs available, contextual factors are important to consider not only when we compare study abroad to other types of language learning programs, but also among the various types of study abroad programs. Research in this important area has focused on how students' living arrangements relate to changes in students' linguistic skills.

In 1998, Rivers undertook a study that compared the progress of students who spent a semester in Russia living in a dormitory with other Americans to students who spent their semester living with a Russian host family. After examining the two groups, he found that they were quite similar in terms of demographics, language skills and learning experience. The prevailing wisdom would suggest that students who lived with a Russian family would have more opportunities to interact with native speakers and therefore their skills would improve more than students who lived in a dormitory situation. However, Rivers found that staying with a Russian host family actually bore a weak negative correlation with improvement in speaking skills. In terms of listening, staying with a host family showed virtually no correlation, but staying with a host family

was a major predictor of improvements in students' reading abilities. Rivers explains these results by referring to a study by Frank (1997, qtd in Rivers, 1998). Frank used an ethnographic approach to examine the nature of students' experience with a host family. He found that both hosts and participants expressed frustration at students' inability to communicate in Russian. This may have been what limited students' interaction with their host family to satisfying basic daily needs and watching television together with members of the host family. He claimed that students often retreated to their bedroom and focused more on their academic assignments than on interaction with their hosts.

Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight (2004) investigated the nature of the home stay setting in various study abroad programs in Spain and Mexico. Their study gathered information from three sources, the housing directors, students and host families by using questionnaires and interviews. Their study revealed that for the most part staying with a host family was a very positive experience. Nearly all of the students queried overwhelmingly responded that they would recommend staying with a host family to other students. Even so, students' chief complaint was that they wished they had had more interaction with their host family. Interestingly, the host families also expressed being frustrated that students did not interact enough with them. Many families felt that students were busy and "just passing through." Indeed, the amount of interaction with the host family is likely to be crucial to the students' success both in terms of language and culture learning, both for the obvious reason that interacting more would lead to more practice and greater insights into the culture, and also because a student who lives with a host family is likely to spend time at home and not somewhere else where he or she could have interaction with other native speakers. For students in a dormitory setting,

if one native speaker is unfriendly they can just move on to the next. The difference is that home-stay students have a more natural entrée and frequent opportunities for contact.

This theory is borne out in Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight's data. Few of the students interviewed reported making friends with native speakers outside of the host family. Additionally, there was a strong correlation between students reporting that they were satisfied with their language learning and the amount of time that students reported that their family had spent with them.

Additionally, Sieloff-Magnan and Back (2007) that among study abroad students in France there was no significant difference between the improvements in oral proficiency of students who stayed with a host family and those who stayed in a dorm or other living arrangements with non-native speakers of French.

2.3 PREDICTORS OF IMPROVEMENT IN STUDY ABROAD

As researchers found that study abroad students tended to make greater gains, they also found that students abroad varied greatly in the amount of progress that they made while abroad. Much of the research on study abroad has attempted to discover why students vary so much in the progress that they make during study abroad. These studies looked for factors related to growth in study abroad by tracking changes in the use of specific aspects of the language, as well as employing more global measures such as oral proficiency.

2.3.1 Predictors of Improvement in Study Abroad - Contact/Interaction

This section will examine some of the relevant research in second language acquisition as it relates to the role of input, interaction and output in language learning, as well as those studies that examine these factors in a study-abroad setting.

Those involved in study abroad, whether teachers, students or administrators, often assume that while students are abroad they will undoubtedly engage in many interactions with native speakers in the target language and that this will propel them to new heights of fluency in the target language (Mendelson, 2004). Indeed, much of the research in study abroad supports this assumption. These findings coincide with some of the major theories of second language acquisition, especially those that recognize the importance of input and/or interaction in developing greater skills in the language. This research has its roots in work by Hatch (1978), who argues for the importance of conversation in developing grammar, and Krashen (1985), who holds that comprehensible input is vital to SLA (Mackey, 1999). Long argues that interaction is important in SLA because of linguistic and other modifications that give learners the input that they need.

Many researchers have provided support for this idea and examined different aspects of how input and interaction affect learning. Pica, Young and Doughty (1987), found that non-native speakers (NNS) who received unmodified input and who were allowed to interact with a native speaker had significantly higher comprehension than those who had only received premodified input. They concluded that greater interaction led to increased repetition of input. Gass and Varonis (1994) found that non-native speakers who were provided with unmodified instructions on a task and then allowed to

interact with native speakers to negotiate the meaning of the instructions were subsequently better able to give instructions than non-native speakers who had only received modified input.

Other researchers, such as Long, Inagaki and Ortega (1998), explain that input alone may not be enough if the goal is more accurate and native-like speech. Their study indicates that those adult NNS who receive negative feedback in the form of recasts in conversation were able to learn more effectively than those who were simply presented with an accurate model.

Mackey (1999) also found positive effects of interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers. In particular, the interaction induced with goal-based tasks led to greater improvement in higher-level structures than did less active forms of interaction or simple observation of the goal-based interactions.

Perhaps the results of these and other studies explain why study abroad is often effective in helping students to improve their skills. The study-abroad setting, unlike the classroom setting, is thought to provide students with opportunities to receive natural input and interaction in the target language. Additionally, the interactions with native speakers in study abroad are goal-based in the sense that students have a need to communicate for a purpose other than pure language learning, (i.e. meeting survival needs, desire to connect and make friends and curiosity regarding culture, among other things).

In addition to the importance and perhaps even primacy of input, other research reminds learners of the importance of output in learning. Swain (1985) investigated

second language acquisition in Canada by comparing the English-speaking children's skill in French to those of native French-speaking students.

She found that English-speaking students in French immersion classrooms performed very similarly to native speakers of French, except on oral activities and especially in grammatical accuracy. She claims that students in such settings receive large amounts of comprehensible input. They listen to their teacher in French each day and learn large amounts of subject matter through French. The problem according to Swain is that students are rarely pushed to produce comprehensible output. Students do not have sufficient opportunities in the classroom to produce French. They also develop strategies for getting their meaning across sufficiently to be understood by their teachers and peers. She claims that producing in the target language forces students to analyze the language syntactically. Later research introduced the output hypothesis, which claims that as learners attempt to speak, their attention will be drawn to the specific difficulties they experience when expressing themselves in the target language. Sometimes this "noticing", as it is called, will occur due to feedback from conversation with other speakers; however, noticing can sometimes occur without implicit or explicit feedback (Swain, M., & Lapkin, S., 1995). In this light, output is important for second language learning because it allows students to see the holes in their skills, pushes them to analyze the language syntactically and provides the opportunity to receive feedback.

One of the variables that best predicts improvements in oral skills of students abroad is interaction in the target language (Brecht, 1993, Keating, 1994). Freed, (1990 qtd. in Yager, 1998) developed an instrument called the language contact profile which provides a means of measuring the amount of contact that students have had with native

speakers in the target language outside of class during a summer abroad program. She utilized this instrument to determine the effects of different kinds of informal contact on changes in students' grammatical accuracy. Her study found that beginning students' informal contact with Spanish speakers outside of class was positively related to improvement in grammar as measured by the CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board) test for Spanish. For advanced students in the same program, she found that non-interactive contact such as reading or watching television in the target language was positively correlated with grammar improvement, but interactive contact bore no relationship to changes.

Yager (1998) also sought to understand the relationship between interaction and language gains, as well as the relationship of cultural attitudes, motivation and language gains. His study also used the language contact profile to gauge interaction, but differed from Freed's in that it involved the use of native speakers to rate excerpts of students' speech from before and after their period abroad. Yager then asked those raters to judge each student's speech as more or less native in three categories: general Spanish, grammar and pronunciation. His results were similar to those of Freed. He found that students with greater interactive contact while abroad correlated with improvement in general Spanish and pronunciation. This pattern was especially true of beginning students. A negative relationship existed between non-interactive contact and gains in general Spanish and pronunciation.

Keating (1994) also found that for students studying Spanish abroad, interaction with native speakers was one of the most important factors in improving their skills. His

study claims that this interaction allowed students to see the gaps in their skills and receive naturalistic feedback that increased their motivation.

Additionally, the Brecht and Robinsion (1993) study mentioned previously, found a strong relationship between the amount of time students spent speaking exclusively in Russian and the improvement students demonstrated in their oral language skills. These results indicate that interaction with native speakers is also related to gains in proficiency during students' time abroad.

Isabelli (2001) similarly provides support for interaction with native speakers as a variable that relates to language improvement in study abroad. Her study tracked a small group of students who studied abroad for one year in Argentina. Isabelli interviewed students periodically throughout the year to determine their oral proficiency and grammatical accuracy. She also examined students' motivation and social relationships with native speakers while abroad. She found that students who were more motivated developed more extensive social relationships. These activities also correlated with improvement in linguistic accuracy and proficiency. She concluded that motivated students were more likely to make linguistic improvements because of their social interaction with native speakers.

Despite the strong implication in these studies that input and interaction lead to language acquisition, as well as the intuitive appeal of the idea that interacting with native speakers improves language skills, some of the data within study abroad research is less clear-cut. In a previously mentioned study, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that fluency of students who went abroad did indeed improve more than the students who remained at home. The study also asked the students to report the amount of time they

spent speaking Spanish outside of class. They found that more time spent speaking Spanish outside of class did not correlate with more improvement in fluency. They also found that for one aspect of fluency, length of longest turn, there was a negative relationship with time spent speaking with the host family. The authors refer to other studies such as that of Wilkinson (1998a), which suggests that interaction with the host family may consist of brief, superficial exchanges that may not have provided the type of input necessary to increase language skills.

Sieloff-Magnan and Back (2007) also found that time spent interacting with native speakers did not correlate with improvements on the OPI among students learning French while in Paris.

Given the importance placed on interaction in second language acquisition literature and the conflicting results regarding the importance of interaction in language learning during study abroad, more research is necessary to determine the role of interaction in language learning during study abroad.

2.3.2 Predictors of Improvement in Study Abroad - Pre-Program Level

The question of how students' skill levels predict their learning while abroad can also be somewhat complex. A qualitative study by Brecht and Robinson (1993), found that students with higher pre-departure skill levels tended to spend more time speaking entirely in Russian than did those at lower levels. They concluded that higher initial proficiency led to more frequent use of the language. They also found that those who spent more time speaking exclusively in Russian gained more than the students who frequently spoke English and Russian. The authors cite these findings as indirect

evidence that students with higher initial levels may benefit more from study abroad than those at lower skill levels.

However, the matter becomes complicated when compared with the conflicting conclusion of the quantitative study by Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1993), which examined the quantitative data from the same students. Their analysis showed a strong and negative relationship between pre-departure levels in all of the skills (reading, listening and the OPI) with post-program levels in each measure. This analysis suggests that the students with less initial skill made greater improvements than those at more advanced levels.

Ginsberg (1992), in a separate paper, also found that for all modalities, higher pre-program levels predicted lower gains. Not surprisingly, improvement in one area tended to predict improvement in other areas as well. However, students sometimes made gains in one modality and not in another, regardless of pre-program level.

A study by Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1995) corroborated Ginsberg's findings. They examined the gains of 100 English-speaking students of French who participated in a 3-month, interprovincial exchange in Canada. They also found a strong negative relationship between the pre-program levels and gains at the end of the program: the lower the initial scores, the greater the gains. However, unlike the Brecht articles, this study reported certain threshold effects which varied depending on the skill being measured. For example, students with extremely low scores in reading prior to departure made significantly less improvement than those with low, but not extremely low scores. This suggests that there could be a minimal level of proficiency at which learning abroad

is optimal. Such effects may not have been found in the Brecht studies since very few students had extremely low scores prior to departure.

The general idea put forth in these studies has intuitive appeal. In almost any activity, it is the initial improvements that are the greatest. For beginners in a sport or in other endeavors, large improvements happen fairly quickly, but as time goes on improvements are notched in smaller and smaller increments until improvements come only through the most vigorous effort. However, the issue of predicting gains also brings up questions regarding how gains are measured. Many studies rely on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to determine students' improvements over the course of study abroad. However, the OPI may be somewhat unsuited for these purposes. The scoring scale used in the OPI is often described as an inverted pyramid. The lowest levels form the point of the triangle. According to this scale, at the beginning, students have a narrow range of skills to conquer before moving up. As students reach higher levels on the scale the pyramid widens. This implies that students must master an increasingly wider range of skills in order to reach a higher score than they did to move from the very bottom of the scale to the initial levels. Consequently, a jump from novice to intermediate may not be as difficult or require as much time as a move registered at higher levels.

This also means that a person who begins a program at more advanced levels according to the ACTFL guidelines may learn and improve over the course of their time abroad, but the OPI may not be able to distinguish these changes. In all likelihood they have improved, but they have not improved sufficiently to demonstrate an improvement in their skills (Freed, 1995, Brecht, 1993). Therefore, studies that use the OPI may not be

able to answer the question of whether a person who began at higher levels learned as much as a person at lower levels. With that said, the same pattern of lower initial levels predicting greater improvements was found regardless of whether or not the OPI or other measures were used.

This can also make it difficult for program planners to decide at what stage in their development students should go abroad. It would be tempting to say that students should go abroad fairly early in their studies, perhaps at novice high or intermediate low. At such a level they would have the ability to meet basic communicative needs and yet move quickly through to higher levels. However, there may be other considerations. For example, if the goal of a particular student or program is to reach advanced levels of proficiency, then sending the student abroad at an early stage of development may mean that they still need another experience abroad to reach advanced or higher levels of proficiency. Study abroad can be very time consuming and expensive, and most students have a difficult time managing one program during their studies. Therefore, one could make the case for acquiring as much facility in the language before going abroad and then using the time abroad to push themselves into the upper levels of proficiency.

2.3.3 Predictors of Improvement in Study Abroad - Grammar Knowledge

In a study mentioned previously, Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1993) suggest the importance of grammar knowledge for students acquiring a language abroad. They found that pre-departure scores on grammar tests were predictive of gains in listening and speaking. They conclude that investment in grammar instruction in early years of

language learning may produce learners who will develop the independent capacity to learn from native speakers.

Another intriguing study by Veguez (1984) examined the language skills of seniors at Middlebury College in Vermont who had spent their junior year abroad in a Spanish-speaking country. Not surprisingly, their overall speaking proficiency was greatly improved and most rated at the 2+ level on the OPI. However, most of the students had little or no control of the subjunctive and found elaborate strategies to avoid its use in the proficiency interviews. Furthermore, the writing skills of these students did not show the same improvements as their oral skills. Veguez terms these students "expensively trained street speakers of the language." This is not to say that students' time abroad was wasted. Nearly all university students would be pleased to speak at a 2+ at the end of their undergraduate studies. The question remains as to how useful and important knowledge of the subjunctive and other higher-level grammar constructs would have been to these students. Taken together, these two studies suggest that knowledge of grammar is important in improvement of language skills while abroad. This leaves researchers and practitioners with several important questions, such as: "What kind of grammar knowledge would most facilitate learning in the study- abroad setting?"; "What kind of grammar instruction is most beneficial for students while abroad?" and, "How does knowledge of grammar affect students' achievement abroad?"

2.3.4 Predictors of Improvement in Study Abroad - Motivation

Motivation is one of the most vigorously studied variables related to second language acquisition. Various scholars have asserted that motivation has a major impact

on the way students engage in language learning in general and study abroad in particular (Dornyei, 2005). Dornyei (2000, qtd. in Shedivy, 2004) states that motivation theories in attempt to explain three parts of human behavior: why one chooses to do something, why one persists in that action and the effort that one expends doing so. Gardner defines motivation as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity (1985)." Gardner holds that motivation falls into two basic categories: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation is thought of as a desire to connect with or become a part of the lives of speakers of a particular language, while instrumental motivation could be termed as the desire to learn a language for practical, considerations such as getting a job or being able to read on a particular subject.

In the realm of study abroad research, several different types of questions can be asked, "What effect does participation in a study abroad program have on students' motivation to learn a second language?" Similarly, "Does the nature of students' motivation change through participation in a program abroad?" and, "How does a students' motivation affect their progress and learning while abroad?" Gardner's work on motivation has held that it is the single greatest predictor of achievement in language learning (Masgoret, Gardner, 2003). Even though motivation has been shown to positively influence language learning in other contexts, few studies have examined how students' motivation affects their achievement in study abroad. One of the few studies to tackle this area was that of Isabelli (2001). As mentioned previously, she examined the progress of five students who spent an academic year in Argentina. In addition to her other findings, she determined that the three students with the highest motivation were

also those who made the greatest improvements in their linguistic skills while abroad. Her findings show support for the idea that motivation also affects outcomes in study abroad programs.

Other research asks not what motivation can do for study abroad, but what study abroad can do for and to motivation. Masgoret and Gardner (2000) carried out a study that involved participants in a program that took students from the UK to Spain for a month to teach English. They found that their experience had a positive effect on students' perceptions of their ability to speak and comprehend Spanish and their instrumental orientation, but their integrative orientation decreased. Also, the overall intensity of students' motivation remained relatively unchanged.

This pattern of little change in students' motivation is found in several other articles as well. MacIntyre, et al. (2003) compared students who at some point in their learning had participated in an immersion program to students whose learning was limited to the standard French as a second language coursework. Results indicated that the immersion students and students of French as a second language did not have significantly different levels of motivation, attitudes toward French speakers or integrativeness. However, the immersion students did have higher levels of willingness to communicate and perceived competence. These results seem to support the results of the other studies that report little change in motivation after study abroad.

Allen and Herron (2003) examined the experiences of twenty-five students who participated in a summer program in France. Their study indicated that while students' linguistic skills improved and their anxiety in speaking the language decreased, their integrative motivation and attitudes towards the French people did not change as a whole.

This pattern seems perplexing since study abroad as a general rule seems to be a time of personal change and stimulation. Maybe the explanation lies in the fact that students do experience a change, but each student's experience is so different that a particular pattern of change in the group as a whole is difficult to measure. This seems borne out by Allen and Herron's (2003) study, they note that despite no significant change in motivational orientation, the standard deviations of all of the motivational measures increased. This was especially true in their category "Attitudes Toward French People."

While enlightening, these studies do little to explain the relationship between motivation and language learning in study abroad. Isabelli's study (2001) may provide insight regarding why this is the case. In addition to finding that students with higher motivation tended to improve their language skills more than other students, she also reported that some of the students' experienced changes in the quality of their motivation. She claims that several students became more interested in cultural aspects of the people whose language they were learning. On the surface this contradicts the results of the other studies mentioned here. However, Isabelli's students were abroad for a minimum of nine months, whereas the other studies reporting on this phenomenon lasted at most three months. Isabelli also found that the students whose motivation became more integrative were also those who tended to improve more in the language and formed more rich social networks. This implies that shorter programs do not allow enough time for students to develop social networks and friendships that would encourage a more integrative orientation and possibly an increase in motivation in general.

The lack of consensus among these studies highlights the need to examine the variable of motivation further. Specifically, it is necessary to determine more clearly whether or not higher levels of motivation in general are linked with greater improvement in students' language skills and whether motivation leads to greater interaction with members of the host culture.

2.3.5 Predictors of Improvement in Study Abroad - Length of Stay

The general consensus of study abroad research is that more is better with regards to the amount of time that students spend in the host country. This seems logical since more time spent doing anything almost always leads to greater achievement or understanding. One scholar states that a year abroad is necessary to maximize the cultural and linguistic understanding that students seek (Dwyer, 2004).

One study attempted to measure the benefits of study abroad in a longitudinal fashion, using self-report data from former study abroad participants (Dwyer, 2004). The study includes the responses of over 3000 individuals and responses are divided into groups according to the length of the program the participant attended. The most obvious result is that students who attended year-long programs reported that study abroad generally had more profound or longer-lasting impacts than students who studied for either a semester or summer session. For example, full-year students were more likely to expand or change their college majors due to study abroad than students who studied for shorter periods of time. Students who had studied abroad for a full year were also more likely to report that they still used a foreign language on a regular basis and that study abroad enhanced their ability to speak a foreign language that they use regularly in the

workplace. In nearly every category surveyed full-year students perceived a greater or longer-lasting impact stemming from their study abroad experience.

Similarly, a study by Medina-Lopez Portillo (2004) examined the differences in the development of cultural sensitivity between students who had spent sixteen weeks as opposed to seven weeks in Mexico. Her study examined the development of students' cultural development according to the six stages of Bennett's model (1986).

Bennett's model claims that a person's intercultural sensitivity ranges from denial of cultural sensitivity to a defensive stage where one feels threatened by cultural differences up to higher levels where a person is aware of and can adapt to and even switch between cultural viewpoints, depending on the context. Her findings indicate that nearly all of the students in the semester program moved up one level within the model. Seven-week students also progressed according to the model but nearly always remained within the same level in which they had begun the program. Also during follow-up interviews, students in the semester long program expressed more nuanced explanations of culture and were able to give more specific examples of cultural differences.

Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight (2004) also examined the experiences of students who had attended either summer or semester programs in Mexico or Spain. Over a two-year period they administered self-report questionnaires to these students. Their responses revealed that students who spent a semester abroad felt that they spent significantly more time speaking with their host family than did the summer students.

Taken together, these studies provide strong evidence that more time abroad generally leads to a more meaningful experience than shorter periods. Despite the benefits of spending more time abroad, more and more students are choosing to study

abroad for shorter and shorter periods. As mentioned previously, 56% of students who study abroad currently choose programs that last less than a semester (Open Doors, 2005). This is probably due to the increased interest in study abroad generally, coupled with the costs in time and money that is required to spend more significant periods away from jobs, loved ones and the course of academic pursuits. However, the question remains, "What benefits do students who participate in short-term programs reap?" To this point little data has been collected specifically examining short-term programs. The studies mentioned previously, show that while longer was in many respects better, students in summer programs also benefit. Interestingly, in Dwyer's study (2004), students who participated in summer programs often reported as much or more benefit from their sojourn as students who went for a semester. Among former short-term students, sixty-two percent believed that their experience opened up a passion or interest about another language or culture, which is a significantly higher percentage than those who spent a semester abroad. More short-term students than long-term students said that their commitment to learn a foreign language was strengthened by their time abroad.

These results indicate that at the very least short-term students perceive important benefits from their study abroad experience, especially in terms of the effects of their experience on their attitudes and interests. Another study compared students in a winter program abroad to a winter term at home. In just five weeks these students reported that their ability to perform routine survival tasks required by foreign travel increased, for example, making an international phone call while in a foreign country (Chieffo, Griffiths, 2004).

There are also some studies using objective measures that would indicate that programs lasting less than a semester could have measurable impact on language skills and cultural sensitivity. Engle and Engle (2004) examined the improvement of students who went abroad to France for only one semester as opposed to those who spent an entire year. Shortly after arriving and again before leaving, students took the TEF (Test d'Evaluation de Français). Then the researchers used the difference between students' pre- and post-scores to calculate the students' percentages of "achievable progress." Achievable progress is the number of points between the students' initial scores and a perfect score on the test. For example, a student may have scored 400 out of 900 points possible on the TEF, leaving 500 points of improvement that they could demonstrate during their time abroad. One-semester students on average demonstrated improvements of 37% of their achievable progress. In the same semester the one-year students averaged 41% improvement. However, the one-year students only averaged 45% of their achievable progress over the time of their program. This means that most of the progress students made came in the first semester of their program. This may indicate that students in short-term programs could experience substantial gains, because it appears that much of the progress students make comes within their first semester abroad.

Milleret (1991) supports the idea that measurable improvement in students' language skills can take place in less than a semester of study abroad. She administered the Portuguese Speaking Test to students both before and after a summer spent in Brazil learning Portuguese. She found that beginning students on average moved from mid-novice on the ACTFL scale to low-intermediate. This improvement took place during a

five-week program and provides further proof that even brief programs can be of great benefit to beginning students.

Milleret's study, as the other studies regarding length of stay, do not address the question of how students' initial level of skill in the language interacts with the amount of time the students spend abroad. In the case of Milleret's study, beginning students show progress according to the ACTFL guidelines, but accurate information regarding advanced learners is not provided. As mentioned, Engle and Engle (2004) demonstrated gains for students abroad according to length of stay, but did not provide an analysis of how students at different levels progress. With the tools currently available, how best to measure linguistic progress at advanced levels remains somewhat unclear. Similarly, the smaller gains likely to occur in short term programs of one to two months would also be difficult to gauge and therefore unknown. This raises the need for alternative methods that can capture more fine-grained changes in students' linguistic skills.

2.4 CULTURE IN SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND STUDY ABROAD

One of the most often repeated claims of program administrators, student participants and language teachers involved in study abroad is that study abroad is an unparalleled opportunity to gain first hand knowledge of another culture (Engle & Engle, 2003; Wilkinson, 1998b; Day, 1987). This claim is perhaps related to the increasing emphasis placed on culture as part and parcel of teaching a foreign or second language. This section will focus on the history and nature of culture teaching in foreign and second languages and discuss research regarding culture learning in study abroad.

Culture has nearly always been included in the teaching and learning of languages. In the early part of the past century, the culture that was taught was limited almost entirely to the fine arts produced by native speakers of the target language. This is sometimes referred to as the "belle-artes", which Brooks referred to as "refinement," with the assertion that such study focused on the best that mankind has to offer (Brooks, 1960 as cited in Lange, 1998). Lange (1998) claims that this approach is still partially held to today in most universities since it is in keeping with the academy's goal to represent a culture's highest achievement. However, around the decade of the 1960's a shift occurred toward teaching culture that was more anthropological or sociological in nature and that focused attention on the patterns of daily life among speakers of the target language (Moraine, G., 1983). This gave rise to debates about the relative merits of teaching the two versions of culture, as well as what to teach if one opted for teaching culture with a "small c."

During the same time period, work in linguistics began to link language and culture much more closely than they had been previously. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf examined linguistic and cultural differences between Native American languages and English in the way they express notions of time and other aspects of the physical world (Sankoff, 1986, as cited in Mesthrie, R. et al, 2000). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that culture and language are highly interrelated in such a way that the nature of ones' language pushes the speaker into certain ways of thinking. As Sapir states "We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation (Sapir as cited in Whorf, B., Carroll, J., 1998). Scholars disagree as to how strong an influence language exerts over culture, with some opting for a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in which language exerts some control over culture, but with a sufficiently compelling context language will change to suit the environment rather than the other way around (Sankoff, 1986, as cited in Mesthrie, R. et al, 2000). Even in the weaker version of the hypothesis, language and culture affect each other in profound ways and this connection has implications for language learning and teachings. If language can affect how and what a speaker says and thinks then it would be difficult to speak a language without understanding the central perspectives of the target language and culture. Lange may have summed it up best by saying "language is tied to every aspect of culture" (Lange, 1998).

The communicative method seems to recognize the need for cultural understanding in language teaching and, not surprisingly, the advent of the communicative method contributed to the popularity of culture with a small c. Since it

focuses on personal and social functions of language, communicative language teaching is enhanced by understanding how people in the culture live and interact. Some go so far as to call for a culture-based curriculum in foreign language classes and use cultural learning as the main purpose for teaching languages in a university setting (Moraine, G., 1983). The importance of teaching culture in the foreign or second language classroom has continued to grow. In addition to the popularity of the communicative method, the major national organizations in foreign and second language teaching have made the teaching of culture a central occupation of foreign language learning. In 1999, the associations of teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, as well as those of, German, French and Russian and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages completed the National Standards in Foreign Language Education. These standards were developed jointly with a grant from the U.S. government and are used widely by educators across the country. These standards place heavy emphasis on cultural learning in foreign/second language classrooms. They claim that all students should "Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures" by understanding the traditional or widely held-attitude of the culture studied through its products and practices (ACTFL, 1999).

The field has established culture teaching as an important aspect of language teaching, and theoretical work denotes the almost indivisible relationship between language and culture. Yet with all of this, no research has documented the relationship between learning language and culture together. This leaves several important questions with no empirical answer in the literature. How does cultural learning affect language learning if indeed there is a separation between the two? Is there some benefit to

students' linguistic growth from the teaching of culture? Do students with more cultural expertise have an advantage in acquiring language or interacting with native speakers?

2.4.1 Culture Learning and Adaptation in Study Abroad

Research in language learning during study abroad has provided some insights as to the role of culture in language learning and vice versa and highlights the need for more work in these questions both in and out of a study-abroad context. This section will examine research into cultural aspects of study abroad programs in general, as well as, the relationship between language learning and culture in study-abroad settings.

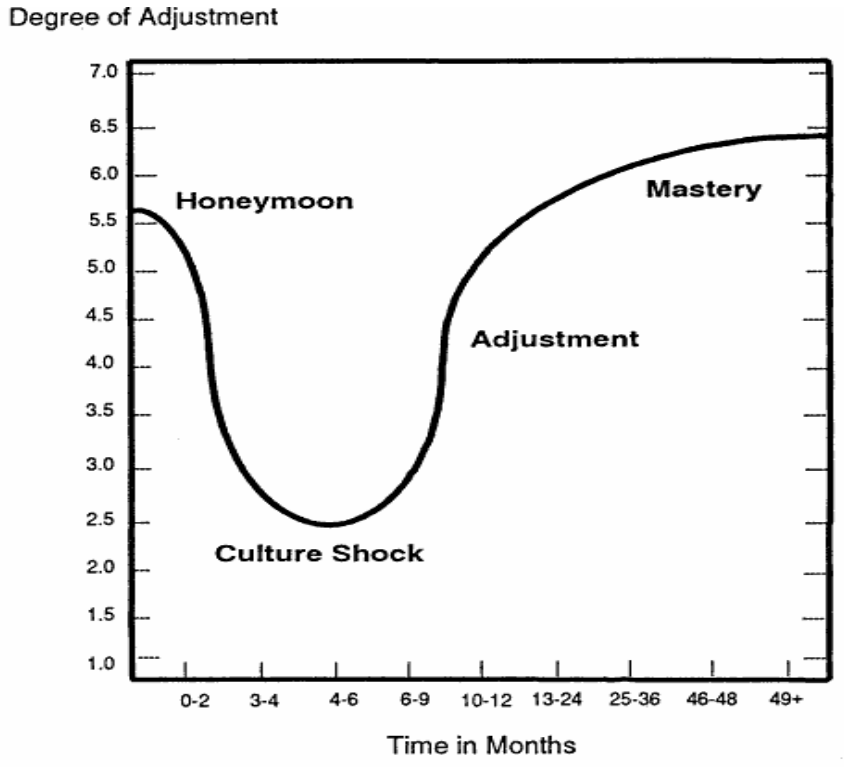
The research regarding the role of culture in study abroad falls into two general categories. One group could be categorized as case studies of small groups of students using qualitative methods. The other employs self-report questionnaires and analyzes the data quantitatively. In the latter group, Chiefo and Griffiths (2004) used self-report questionnaires to examine the differences between students who take courses at home and students who go abroad, with a total of two thousand three hundred participating. Both groups participated in a "winterim" or winter semester of five weeks.

At the end of the courses, both groups received a questionnaire regarding what the authors term "Global Awareness" For this study that meant knowledge or experience in four categories: intercultural awareness, personal growth and development, awareness of global interdependence and functional knowledge of world geography and language. In each of the categories study abroad participants reported significantly greater "Global Awareness" than the students who studied similarly courses while remaining at their home campus. Notably, students who went abroad had more empathy for non-English

speakers in the U.S., were more likely to recognize that the "whole world is not like the U.S." and that there are other cultures that exist very differently from our own (Chiefo and Griffiths, 2004)."

These findings show the growth that develops in students' cultural perspective through study abroad. However, in getting to this point students often have to navigate the alternately smooth and thorny road of cultural differences. Research in cross-cultural adjustment describes the process that those who travel abroad experience as U-shaped. Oberg (as cited in Spradley, J. & Philips, M., 1972) claims that individuals experience four stages of cultural adjustment or, as he put it, "culture shock." Culture shock is often thought of a single, exclusively negative state, but the literature actually looks at culture shock as a process like that depicted in the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Depiction of Oberg's U-Curve of Cross-Cultural Adjustment



Those who travel abroad begin on a high termed the "honeymoon stage" that can last several weeks. During this phase everything seems exotic or interesting. Then the sojourners descend into a hostile stage in which the individual is critical of his/her host country and, if possible, withdraws among his fellow expatriates. This is followed by a period of recovery called adjustment, leading eventually to the final stage of mastery as seen in Figure 1(Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M., 1991).

Culture shock, the initial stage of coming into contact with the new culture can be extremely stressful. Furnham (1994) explains that cultures can differ so widely in terms of language, religion, moral views, relationship between sexes and codes of behavior that extremely simple tasks suddenly become complex and occasionally impossible. Argyle

argues, “social behavior may be understood as skilled performance” (as cited in Furnham, 1994). He compares the experience of visiting a foreign culture for the first time to that of a person who lacks social skills in his home culture. If a person lacks proper socialization due to poor relationships with family or peers, they will experience difficulties in relating to others, expressing opinions and interpreting non-verbal signals. In a similar way, a person who visits a foreign country for the first time and is unfamiliar with its mores will experience the same kinds of difficulties. Many travelers are, of course, extremely competent at all kinds of social interactions in their home culture, so suddenly losing those skills can be extremely disconcerting. Furnham and Bochner (as cited in Furnham, 1994) provide a list of typical situations that cause foreign travelers problems, among them, people standing or sitting very close to you, knowing how to complain in public, such as when one receives unfair treatment, how to be the leader of a small group, understanding jokes or sarcasm, using toilet facilities in public or private and understanding how to get to know people in depth.

These difficulties are corroborated by a study by Warden, Lapkin, Swain and Hart (1995). They analyzed the journals of eighteen English-speaking students who spent three months on an exchange in Quebec. They found that almost every student wrote about their initial fear and shock at dealing with their new surroundings, family, school and all in a language in which they were not particularly proficient. One student commented, “Friday was very hard. I felt like I didn’t want to get off the bus. I just wanted to go home.” Another student stated, “With all the French I’ve taken in the last eight years, nothing has prepared me for this.” Another stated “feels like a child again learning to communicate (Warden, Lapkin, Swain and Hart, 1995).”

In the face of these cultural difficulties students abroad may have a variety of reactions. One case study explored not only the outcomes of a student's experience abroad, but the journey towards cultural understanding that the student undertook (Bacon, 2002). The participant traveled from her native England to spend a semester at a university in Mexico. This student was selected for this study because she was somewhat typical of study abroad participants: twenty years old, female, middle-class, bright, English-speaking and motivated by a desire to improve her Spanish skills. Through participant observation, interviews and analysis of class documents, the author uncovers the process of cultural learning that the participant, Lily, experienced. The author characterizes this process in terms of Furnham and Bochner (1986), in which one gains cultural competence and learns to perform culturally or learns the rules and learns the game.

During this learning cycle, the student whose experience provided the focus of the study experienced wrenching misunderstandings. Yet even when a sojourner understands cultural rules he or she may be unwilling to adapt or change their own values. Upon arrival in Mexico, Lily's own cultural values and perhaps strong personality brought an immediate clash. Initially, her cultural missteps were just that, mistakes made out of ignorance such as, dressing too casually for class or not allowing men to open doors. However, as she became aware of these cultural differences she began to go intentionally against the grain by, traveling alone, dancing by herself and felt put off by her perception that Mexican students work just to please their parents and not themselves. As the semester went on, her attitude softened and she began to make connections between her in-class learning and out-of-class experiences. Originally, she had insisted on using the

tú form of address with everyone, but by the end of the semester, she had slipped into Usted with her interviewer. She also became more accepting of male and female roles in Mexican society: "I would have called it machismo at the beginning, but don't anymore . . . I just think it's their culture and who am I to say they're wrong . . ." Clearly, this student went through a process of learning the rules and, fortunately for her, was able to participate in the cultural game. Her experience seems to exemplify the U-shaped process described previously with initial excitement, followed by frustration and rejection and apparently towards the end of the experience some level of adjustment.

At times the study abroad context itself develops a unique brand of cultural mores. Wilkinson (1998b) used interviews and observation to understand the nature of students' sojourns in an abroad program in Paris. One of her major findings was that students unwittingly carried the culture of the classroom with them in their conversations with native speakers. One example cites two American students who were attempting to buy train tickets from a travel agent. The students played the role of students to perfection by taking turns, volunteering information and asking questions regarding vocabulary. The agent also filled the role of teacher by prompting, helping one student to maintain the floor and asking questions - not for informational purposes, but only to provide an opportunity for the students to speak in the target language. In this case, the interaction seemed positive for both parties. This unique discourse pattern developed as a result of the frequent interactions between the travel agent and students whose experience using the target language occurred almost exclusively in the classroom setting.

However, in other interactions where students assumed the role of student outside the classroom the results were not as positive (Wilkinson, 1998b). When speaking with

children in the home where she was staying, one student anticipated that since the child was the proficient native speaker, the child should initiate topics and ask questions. However, the child tended to be confused by this expectation, likely since the student was the adult. These confusions also tended to exacerbate cultural misunderstandings.

In the same study, cultural misunderstandings were a constant source of frustration for many students. Because of these cultural quandaries, students frequently felt that the immersion setting was extremely complicated and perplexing. Students found themselves wondering why and when French people smile, when to make eye contact or greet strangers. Lack of cultural knowledge in these areas left the students confused or blaming the French for having poor manners or being generally unfriendly. In turn, this lack of cultural sensitivity prevented in-depth interaction with French speakers.

2.4.2 Culture and Language Learning in Study Abroad

Other studies also cite cultural differences as an obstacle to students' language learning during their time abroad. Twombly (1995), as mentioned previously, found that students in Costa Rica found many of the local cultural beliefs and practices offensive, annoying or simply confusing. In the face of such differences the students tended to band together. In this particular program, the North American students spent sufficient time together under a particular tree in the schoolyard that became known as the "gringo tree." This highlights the importance of students' cultural sensitivity in moving beyond cultural differences in order to prevent students from withdrawing from the local culture and providing themselves with further opportunities for language and culture learning.

This tendency to avoid contact with native speakers because of cultural differences can be seen in Wilkinson (1998). One of the students featured had little to no prior experience with cultures other than her own. She had a very difficult time coming to terms with the cultural differences with which she was faced. When confronted with cultural differences as a consumer in local stores or with the very different perspective of her host family regarding how a home should function, this student had difficulty in accepting or seeing these differences as being due to culture. On the other hand, another student in the same program had had frequent exposure to other cultures. Having been an immigrant to the U.S. from Cambodia and having spent time in several other countries, she considered herself a citizen of the world. The cultural sensitivity this student had developed allowed her to navigate cultural differences without defensiveness and continue to interact with her host family and other native speakers.

Study abroad students spending time together sometimes to the exclusion of meeting and interacting with native speakers is not an isolated phenomenon. Day (1987) claims that study abroad participants often move in a "cultural ghetto" in which speaking needs rarely rise above those of the intermediate mid-level according to the guidelines of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages. Obviously, limiting one's interaction with native speakers while abroad would not promote language or culture learning, and many study abroad programs are encouraged to keep American students from spending time together.

However, there is tension among students and administrators about how much time students should spend with others from their home country while abroad. Oberg's U-shaped process of cultural adaptation predicts that students will experience great stress

from the cultural differences that they encounter, which will push them towards the safety of cultural similarity. Generally, this is seen as a negative pattern, but Wilkinson (1998b) believes that spending time with other students allows students to process the overwhelming newness of their surroundings. One student states, "If I hadn't formed the friends that I did, I don't know what I would have done—curled up in my room or something." Another stated that she "didn't see how it could be any other way" and felt that speaking with same culture friends abroad was "a relief." She believed that for the time she was there spending time occasionally speaking English was "a pretty good balance." Wilkinson claims that these statements contrast with the perception that students lack motivation; instead, they are reacting to their environment in predictable ways which may have actually benefited their learning over time.

Hokanson (2000) provides another perspective on the relationship between language and culture. Her study examined the experience of twenty-nine students who traveled to Guatemala to study Spanish. In this study, she finds that students who began the trip with advanced skill levels in Spanish seemed to make the greatest strides in terms of sensitivity to the culture of the people they interacted with in Guatemala. As an example, she cites the case of Linda. Linda began the program with well-developed skills in Spanish. However, she found eating that eating the black beans, tortillas and eggs, that her host had prepared was difficult and even repugnant even though the home was clean and the food safe and fresh. Later in the program, the author reports that the students visited a community of rural Guatemalans who lived in abject poverty, with pigs walking freely through the home. After talking for a while, the women of the community prepared and served sweetened squash to serve to the students. Linda's perspective had

changed sufficiently that she called the students together and encouraged everyone to "eat the squash and say how good it was," even though they would later have to take medicine because of the unsanitary water used in the community. The author claims that this leap forward in cultural sensitivity was made possible by the student's skill in the target language.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research on study abroad indicates that students experience a variety of learning outcomes as a result of their time abroad. However, there are few explanations for why some students seem to progress more in terms of their language skills or cultural sensitivity than others through their participation in study abroad programs and several variables that seem uniquely important in the study abroad context remain relatively unexplored.

Additionally, students' learning in short-programs has received little attention from researchers.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to attempt to discover the relationship between the following variables and students' learning in short-term study abroad programs; cultural sensitivity, motivation and oral language skills, as well as students' relationship with their host family and the amount of time students' spent interacting with native speakers in the target language.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS/HYPOTHESES

The working hypothesis for this study is that students who go abroad generally experience improvements in their oral language skills, their motivation to learn the target language and their sensitivity to other cultures. Further, it is predicted that interaction in the target language during study abroad and improvement in students'

language skills are positively related and students' cultural sensitivity, relationship with the host family and motivational intensity will positively predict interactive contact with native speakers in the target language and thus predict improvement in student's language skills. In order to provide support for this hypothesis the following research questions were asked:

RQ 1. What changes do students experience in terms of cultural sensitivity during short-term study abroad?

This question will be addressed by measuring students' cultural sensitivity before and after participating in a short-term study abroad program using the Inventory of Cross Cultural Sensitivity, the results of which will then be analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-tests.

RQ 2. What changes do students experience in their oral language skills during short-term study abroad?

This question will be addressed by measuring students' oral language skills before and after participating in a short-term study abroad program using the Test of Oral Language Skills, which will be described in detail later in the chapter. The results of the two administrations of the test will then be analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-tests.

RQ 3. What changes do students experience in motivational intensity during their study abroad program?

This question will be addressed by measuring the intensity of students' motivation to learn Spanish before and after participating in a short-term study abroad

program using the Survey of Motivational Intensity, which was adapted from Gardner (1985) and will be described in detail later in the chapter. The results of the two administrations of the survey will then be analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-tests.

RQ 4. What is the relationship between changes in students' cultural sensitivity and changes in students' oral language skills during their time abroad?

This question will be addressed using a Pearson's correlation. This test will be performed using the difference scores from the pre and post administrations of the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity and the Test of Oral Language Skills.

RQ 5. Does interaction with native speakers predict changes in motivational intensity in study abroad participants?

This question will also be addressed using a Pearson's correlation. This test will be performed using students' totals from the questions relating to interaction with native Spanish speakers on the Language Contact Profile and the difference scores from the pre and post administrations of the survey of motivational intensity.

RQ 6. Which of the following variables, cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and initial language level, predict interaction in the target language with native speakers?

This question will be addressed using multiple regression analysis. The predictor variables will be the pre-scores for cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity, oral languages skills and the scores from the survey of the host family relationship. The criterion variable will be students' totals from the questions relating

to interaction with native Spanish speakers on the Language Contact Profile. Using multiple regression will indicate which of these predictor variables significantly predicts the criterion variable and also indicate how much of the variance in the criterion variable is uniquely accounted for by each.

RQ 7. Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity, oral language skills, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in oral language skills?

This question will be addressed using multiple regression analysis. The predictor variables will be the pre scores for cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity, as well as the scores from the survey of the host family relationship and totals from the questions relating to interaction with native Spanish speakers on the Language Contact Profile. The criterion variable will be the difference between the scores students made on the Test of Oral Language Skills before and after going abroad. Using multiple regression will indicate which of these predictor variables significantly predicts the criterion variable and also indicate how much of the variance in the criterion variable is uniquely accounted for by each.

RQ 8. Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of motivation and oral language skills, students' relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in cultural sensitivity?

This question will be addressed using multiple regression analysis. The predictor variables will be the pre scores for motivational intensity and oral language

skills, as well as the scores from the survey of the host family relationship and totals from the questions relating to interaction with native Spanish speakers on the Language Contact Profile. The criterion variable will be difference between the scores students made on the Test of Oral Language Skills before and after going abroad. Using multiple regression will indicate which of these predictor variables significantly predicts the criterion variable and also indicate how much of the variance in the criterion variable is uniquely accounted for by each.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

Participants for this study were selected using purposeful sampling. All of the participants were students from a large university in the southwestern United States who participated in a summer abroad program in Argentina that was administered by the students' home university.

All participants were undergraduate university students and were required to have taken at least one year of university-level Spanish. However, many students had received more than one year of instruction before the program began. Because of this, students participating in the program had varying levels of proficiency from beginning to advanced. All of the students who participated were native English speakers between the ages of 18 and 30, with nearly even numbers of male and female participants. In order to participate in this study abroad program, students submitted an application to their home university. The students' home university selected students to participate in the program based on the contents of this application, which

included a personal essay, recommendations from faculty and grade point average, with preference given to students with a 3.0 or higher.

Access to these students was granted through the study abroad office of the students' home university and students were contacted individually for their consent. Students chose to participate voluntarily in this study and were informed that the study abroad program did not require participation. Students were made aware that their responses would remain completely confidential.

The official program lasted approximately six to eight weeks. Prior to their departure, students were required to attend one pre-departure meeting in which they received information that was intended to prepare them for the cultural differences they would experience, as well as the programs' rules and suggestions for conduct. The meeting lasted one to two hours. Former participants came to share their experiences along with Argentine students who were currently studying at the students' home university. The meeting addressed differences between perspectives in the U.S. and Argentina relating to time, communication styles, preferred topics of conversation and the U-Shaped process of cultural adjustment put forth by Oberg and others, as mentioned previously in this text. As part of this orientation, students received a copy of Lonely Planet Argentina (Palmerlee et al., 2005), which is a guidebook for travelers, and a packet prepared by the program containing information on culture shock, definitions of culture and an overview of the topics discussed in the meeting.

During their time abroad the students lived with an Argentine host family selected by their home university in conjunction with the host university. The program offered a wide variety of courses ranging from second year Spanish to upper division courses designed for Spanish majors such as, practical phonetics, advanced grammar and Argentine culture. Students attended approximately six hours of class per week. This program is categorized as a faculty-led program, which means that instructors from the students' home university will teach the courses. In addition to their course work, students participated in several excursions planned by the host university to visit sites of cultural interest. Students also had the option of being paired with a local student with whom they were encouraged to meet twice a week in order to exchange English and Spanish conversation.

This program was selected for the present study because of its excellent reputation with the study abroad office and the department of Spanish and Portuguese at the participants' home university. Faculty and administrators feel that this program provides the best learning opportunities in terms of language and culture among the many Spanish language study abroad programs that the university offers. They also feel that the host families make diligent efforts to have the students involved in the family and its activities. Additionally, the program's organizers claim that Cordoba, the host city, is excellent for studying Spanish because there is relatively less tourism and less English spoken than in other locations where students often go for study abroad.

3.4 INSTRUMENTS

3.4.1 Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity

Before departing and shortly after their arrival home, students completed the **Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity** (ICCS). This inventory was designed by Kenneth Cushner (1986) and is used for a variety of purposes such as determining which students or personnel would be most suited for an international experience or other intense cross-cultural experience. Program administrators can also use it to evaluate the effects of curriculum interventions and program experiences such as study abroad on students and other participants. The test consists of 32 items that correspond to one of five subscales: Cultural Integration, Behavioral Scale, Intellectual Interaction, Attitude Toward Others, and the Empathy Scale. Combined, these scores yield a total score of cross-cultural sensitivity, which can range from 0 to 224. The ICCS has been examined for both content and construct validity and has been able to accurately distinguish between those with extensive cross-cultural experience and those without such experience. Reliability estimates for the scales seem to be quite stable at .9415 for the Cultural Integration scale, .7009 for the behavior scale, .8869 for the Intellectual Interaction scale, .7860 for the Attitude Toward Others Scale and .5239 for the Empathy Scale. A copy of the ICCS is attached as Appendix 1a. This instrument was chosen in part because it seeks to identify a kind of skill that would be helpful in any type of cross- cultural experience. This seemed preferable to a test with a narrower focus such as knowledge of a specific

culture, since it seemed unlikely that very many students would have much concrete knowledge of Argentina which would make analysis rather meaningless. Also cultural sensitivity as a skill or characteristic seemed to have a broader application than knowledge of specific cultural facts in the sense that one may have in-depth knowledge of one culture or country, but it would be difficult to be expert in more than a few. However, a more general sensitivity or openness to other cultures could be beneficial in any cross-cultural context.

3.4.2 Test of Oral Language Skills

For purposes of this study, the language assessment focused on students' speaking skills. This is because it seems likely that the informal learning that occurs in study abroad through interacting with native speakers would affect oral skills such as speaking more than skills such as reading or writing. Before and after studying abroad, students were asked to respond orally in Spanish to two contextualized tasks taken from the OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) and the TOPT (Texas Oral Proficiency Test), which is a test used in the state of Texas to certify bilingual teachers and is based on the OPI (see appendix 1b-Oral Language Tasks).

The first task asked students to "describe the home you [s/he] grew up in." The second task asked students to imagine that they had missed an important exam and had to explain to the teacher what happened and schedule a makeup. The researcher would read the task aloud to the student in English and ask if the student understood what the task was asking. The researcher would inform the student that their response

could take up to one minute and 30 seconds. For the first task, students were provided with a picture to stimulate their thinking on the topic (see appendix 1c – Prompt Oral Language Task 1). For the second task, no picture was provided.

Students' spoke into a headset with a microphone connected to either a PC laptop that recorded students' responses in digital format using Windows Sound or a Macintosh laptop using a program called Audio Recorder. Students' responses to these two tasks provided a sample of approximately three minutes of each student's Spanish from before and after their time abroad. Later, a panel of 3 native speakers of Spanish, as well as the researcher rated each speech sample on pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary and comprehensibility. This was done using a scale ranging from 1 to 5, except for comprehensibility, which used a scale of 1 to 3. Comprehensibility referred to how well the raters were able to understand a given student's speech.

In order to score the samples of student speech, the researcher created a rubric with descriptors for the kind of speech that would fall under each level of each of the categories. This rubric was used to train the raters and guide them while rating (see appendix 1d – Test of Oral Language Skills Rubric). It was adapted from other rubrics such as that used by the Inter-agency Language Roundtable, as well as other research and scholarly works (Higgs, 1984, Koren, 1995, Okamura, 1995). Samples were presented to the raters in random order so that the raters were unaware of whether a given sample was taken before or after the student went abroad. In order to increase reliability the researcher and the raters discussed the rubric prior to beginning

the rating process. Then raters listened to and rated a sample of the speech of a student who did not participate in the study and discussed where it would fall according to the rubric. After arriving at a consensus, raters rated more practice samples until the scores of the raters were consistently identical or fell next to each other on the scale in each of the categories. For example, one rater may place a participant at 3 on fluency and another at 2, which would be acceptable. However, a situation where one rater gave a 4 and another a 2 would be unacceptable and would require more discussion of the rubric.

The test of Oral Language Skill had extremely high inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability was calculated for each of the five aspects of speech rated. The Cronbach's Alpha for each is as follows: Pronunciation = .886, Grammar = .902, Fluency = .897, Comprehensibility = .767 and Vocabulary = .914. Also, assessing oral skills this way has the advantage of high face validity since the students are carrying out an actual communicative task for native speakers.

This assessment was developed prior to the actual study in a small pilot of the language assessment to determine if it would be feasible for use on a larger scale in this dissertation. Three native speakers of Spanish, two males and one female, who are graduate students in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the same university in which the research was conducted, served as raters. Additionally, a faculty member versed in language teaching and assessment, as well as the researcher conducted the training and facilitated discussion of the rubric and ratings.

The raters listened to seven samples of student speech. Four of these samples consisted of students who were taking third semester, college Spanish, with no experience abroad and who were not heritage speakers. The fifth sample was that of a student who was also in her third semester, but was a heritage speaker who had had considerable exposure to Spanish. The last two were non-heritage speakers who had participated in the same program as the participants in the actual study one year ago and were nearing completion of a major in Spanish. These students were selected for the pilot in order to determine if this assessment format could reliably distinguish between students who had participated in a short-term program and those who had not, as well as distinguish between students with similar backgrounds in learning Spanish.

After discussing the rubric and descriptors, the raters listened to and scored the speech samples. Raters' scores consistently fell within one point of each other, indicating that this process could be used to reliably measure students with the range of skills that participated in the actual study. The raters also clearly distinguished between the speech of students who had and had not been abroad.

The pilot also provided other information that helped to refine the process. Initially, the rubric asked raters to provide a score for intonation, but not for grammar. However, during the pilot, the group quickly determined that grammar was a valuable component of speaking skill and it was used for all of the pilot ratings. It also became clear that intonation was a difficult aspect of speaking for the raters to score and was discarded. In addition, the raters suggested that comprehensibility could be more

clearly distinguished using a scale of three instead of five. The other areas of pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary remained the same.

3.4.3 Language Contact Profile

This survey is designed to determine the quantity and nature of the students' contact with Spanish during their time abroad. The survey provides a score for both interactive contact in Spanish, as well as non-interactive contact in Spanish. Interactive contact is oral use of Spanish with another person while abroad. Non-interactive contact is Spanish use that does not require being with another person such as reading, watching a movie, studying or listening to music. For each question students must provide the approximate number of days per week that they engaged in a particular activity, as well as the average number of hours per day. Seliger originally designed the language contact profile in the late 1970's, and the version used here is an updated version used frequently by researchers in study abroad and second language acquisition (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, 2004) (See Appendix 1e – Language Contact Profile). Since this survey was modified somewhat from the original cited previously, reliability was recalculated using the responses from this study. This version of the language contact profile shows a high level of reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .833).

3.4.4 Survey of Motivational Intensity

Prior to going abroad and upon completion of their program, students completed a brief questionnaire to determine their motivational intensity. Students responded to a series of descriptive statements regarding motivation such as, "I really work hard to learn Spanish" and then indicated how true that statement was for them personally on a Likert scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating strongly disagrees and 4 strongly agree. These statements are based on an investigation of motivation in language learning performed by Masgoret and Gardner (2004) (See Appendix 1f – Survey of Motivational Intensity). Since some items were added or modified, reliability was calculated for this instrument as used here with Cronbach's Alpha of .855 (pre) and .871 (post).

3.4.5 Survey of Host Family Relationship

Students were given a brief survey to determine the degree to which their host family was supportive in helping them to learn Spanish and adjust during their time abroad. The survey presented students with a variety of statements regarding their relationship with their host family. Then students indicated to what degree they believed that each statement was true and applicable to them on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 4 strongly agree. For example, students responded to statements such as, "My host family encouraged me to speak Spanish with them," or "My host family liked to hear what I had to say." (See Appendix 1g – Host family relationship). The researcher created this survey specifically for this

study. Reliability for this instrument was high with a Cronbach's Alpha of .849. However, item number 6, "My host family encouraged me to speak Spanish with them," bore little relationship to the rest of the items and the researcher made the decision to remove the item so that it would not be used in the analyses. This raised the reliability to .867.

3.5 PROCEDURES

The initial step in undertaking this project was contacting the head of the study abroad office at the students' home university. After explaining the project, the researcher received his approval and he pledged his cooperation. He placed me in contact with the staff members who were directly involved in planning and coordinating the program. The researcher also spoke to the Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and received his approval. The researcher's next step was to contact the students in the program and invite them to participate. The staff member of the study abroad office in charge of the program encouraged me to attend a required orientation meeting and invite students to participate. However, the researcher was slated to speak to the group last and the meeting went longer than expected. By the time the researcher could address the group most of the students had left. Most of those with whom the researcher was able to speak to agreed to participate and signed consent forms (see appendix 1h – Consent Form). In order to contact the rest of the students, the researcher sent a mass email to the group as a whole. Few students responded, so the researcher decided to offer an incentive and

sent another email. This email explained the study and what would be required for participation. It further stated that those who completed all portions of the study would be entered in a drawing for an IPOD Nano, a gift certificate to a restaurant such as Chili's or Outback steakhouse or 2 movie tickets. Even with these enticements very few students responded. So the researcher decided to follow up with individual phone calls to each of the students. Students were much more responsive to these individual phone calls. The researcher scheduled several days in a computer lab on campus. With the help of colleagues the researcher was able to collect data from a large number of participants during this period. Other participants that I had not yet contacted or who were unable to come during those days came at their convenience to my office in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to participate. For this portion of the data collection, which took place prior to the students' departure to Argentina, participants completed the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity, the Survey of Motivational Intensity and the Test of Oral Language Skills.

Even with the researcher's efforts to contact the students, there were many with whom the researcher had been unable to speak to and many who were willing to participate, but were unable to meet with me because they had left town at the end of the semester before going abroad or whose schedules did not allow them to meet with me for various reasons. The researcher also realized that at the end of the program in Argentina many students would not be returning to campus. Some would continue traveling in Argentina or other parts of South America and others would simply choose to spend the rest of their summer break somewhere other than near campus.

This posed several problems for the project. Students would continue to travel or live in Spanish-speaking countries for several more weeks or months would have had much more opportunity to learn than the students who came directly home, making a comparison between them invalid. On the other hand, students who returned to a basically English-only environment for several weeks before being tested may have already begun to lose some of their newly acquired skills. Also, contacting students, scheduling appointments and rescheduling missed appointments was much more difficult than the researcher had anticipated.

At this point, the researcher decided to turn to the teachers who would be traveling to Argentina with the students to assist me in collecting the rest of the data. In exchange for their assistance the researcher offered them monetary compensation and the opportunity to become familiar with the instruments that were used in the study. Students were of course informed that this study was not part of their courses and their choice to participate or not participate in the study would have no bearing on their academic standing.

The program was actually divided into two sessions of six weeks. Some students attended the first session only, others the second session only and some attended both sessions. All students who attended the first session were tested either prior to their departure or within a few days after arriving in the country. Also, students who attended the first session and returned immediately to the home university received the post-tests within approximately one to two weeks after returning home. Students who continued on with the second session or who would not

be returning to a location near the campus received their post-tests one to two days prior to the end of the first summer session. The students who attended only the second session were also tested prior to their departure or within a few days after their arrival. All of the second session only students received the post-tests in Argentina approximately one to two days before the program ended. Post-tests consisted of the same measures as the pre-tests: the Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity, the test of Oral Language Skills, the survey of motivational intensity, as well as two additional measures, the Language Contact Profile and the survey of Survey of Host family relationship.

In all forty-eight students completed all of the measures both before and after their time abroad. One student's oral language data was inadvertently left out of the rating and another student was deemed a native speaker by the raters whose judgment was confirmed by the biographical information that the student had provided on the Language Contact Profile. This left forty-six participants whose data was utilized for analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction to Results

This chapter presents a description and analysis of the data collected using the measures described in chapter three. All analyses were completed on a personal computer using SPSS version 12.0 for Windows. This chapter will briefly review the underlying hypotheses and then examine each of the research questions individually with the corresponding data.

Results will be reported in the following order:

1. Results addressing changes in students' cultural sensitivity, oral language skills and motivation to learn Spanish after their participation in this short term study abroad program.
2. Results addressing questions regarding the relationship between two specific variables.
3. Results addressing questions regarding which variables predict interaction with native speakers, changes in oral language skills and changes in cultural sensitivity.

Descriptive statistics will be provided for each of the variables as the results related to the research questions using those variables are presented.

The working hypotheses for this study are that interaction in the target language during study abroad and improvement in students' language skills are positively related. In turn, students' cultural sensitivity, relationship with the host family and motivational

intensity will positively predict interactive contact with native speakers in the target language and thus predict improvement in student's language skills.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What changes do students experience in terms of cultural sensitivity during short-term study abroad?

This question was addressed by analyzing data from the Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity. Cultural sensitivity was operationalized for purposes of this study as the sum of the responses to the 32 items contained in the Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity.

Descriptive statistics for pre and post measures, as well as difference scores are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics-Cultural Sensitivity

	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error Difference between Means	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pre-cultural sensitivity	45	63	137	200	166.33	2.147	14.402	207.409
Post-cultural sensitivity	45	56	142	198	171.60	2.078	13.939	194.291
Gains-cultural sensitivity	45	44.00	-23.00	21.00	5.2667	1.36159	9.13385	83.427

Prior to going abroad students' mean score for cultural sensitivity was 166.33. After going abroad students' scores on the same measure rose to 171.60, demonstrating a small net gain of 5.27.

In order to understand more fully the changes that this group of students experienced in their cultural sensitivity a T-test was performed. Data were analyzed

using a paired samples t-test to compare the mean level of students' cultural sensitivity from before and after their time abroad. As mentioned, the students showed an overall improvement in cultural sensitivity of 5.27 points. The T-test results were as follows; the Paired Differences mean was 5.267 with a t-value of 3.929 which was significant at the $p<.001$ level (see Appendix 1i-Cultural Sensitivity Results). These results show that the difference between the mean pre-score and mean post score was significant and emphasizes that this group of students as a whole did experience a small yet significant improvement in their level of cultural sensitivity.

Table 2 provides the actual scores that each student received before going abroad and upon completion of the program, as well as the difference between these scores. The table is organized in such a way that gains are listed from largest to smallest. A number is provided for the scores of each participant so that readers can compare the scores of each participant throughout the study.

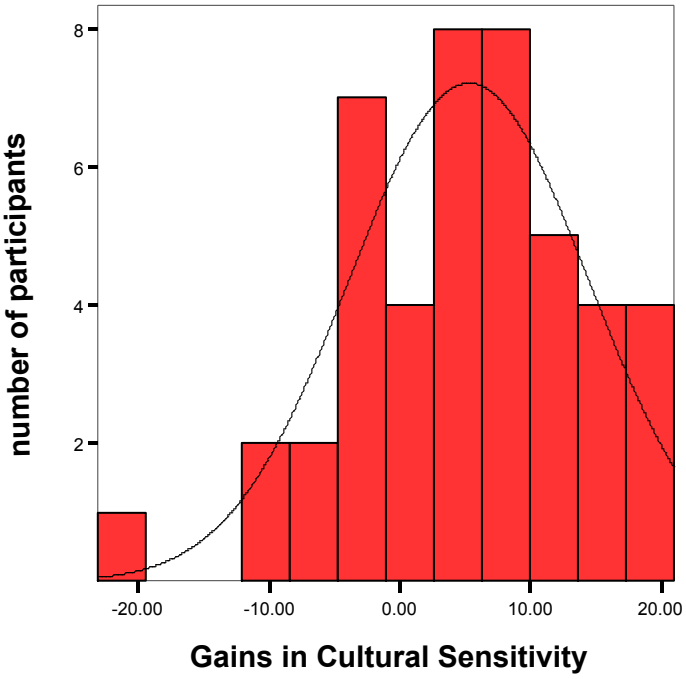
Table 2. Individual Participants' Pre, Post and Gains scores for cultural sensitivity

Participant Number	Pre-Cult Sens	Post-Cult Sens	Cult Sens Gain
38	137	158	21.00
14	173	192	19.00
67	172	191	19.00
57	137	156	19.00
36	169	185	16.00
30	156	172	16.00
39	162	177	15.00
7	184	198	14.00
27	179	192	13.00
6	176	189	13.00
56	160	173	13.00
26	150	163	13.00
42	146	158	12.00
34	169	178	9.00
58	166	175	9.00
48	141	150	9.00
18	179	187	8.00
62	169	177	8.00
41	164	172	8.00
3	160	168	8.00
51	159	166	7.00
50	171	177	6.00
37	153	159	6.00
13	139	145	6.00
12	180	185	5.00
31	180	185	5.00
33	156	161	5.00
70	179	183	4.00
55	156	160	4.00
32	178	180	2.00
15	162	164	2.00
65	173	173	0.00
66	169	169	0.00
47	174	172	-2.00
10	163	161	-2.00
19	158	155	-3.00
24	200	196	-4.00
9	180	176	-4.00
45	178	174	-4.00
63	170	166	-4.00
46	147	142	-5.00
8	172	166	-6.00
23	198	188	-10.00
11	166	156	-10.00
1	175	152	-23.00

Table 2 indicates that many students did make small improvements from pre-test to post test. At the same time there seems to be wide variation in the amount and direction of change in students' scores, with gain scores ranging from a decrease of –23 to an increase of +21.

Figure 2 shows both the trend toward small increases in scores in cultural sensitivity from pre to post-test and the variety of changes that students experienced in their cultural sensitivity.

Figure 2. Histogram of Gains in cultural sensitivity.



Here we see graphically that gain scores tended to cluster around the mean gain of 5.27 with most of the students' gains falling in the range of 5 to 10 points. However, many students also showed a decrease in scores. Decreases in Figure 2 are represented

by all of the bars to the left of 0.00 on the X-axis. For many of these students the decreases are small and could possibly be due to error in measurement.

Figure 3 provides another description of the analysis of differences between students' pre and post-test scores of cultural sensitivity.

Figure 3. Gains in cultural sensitivity

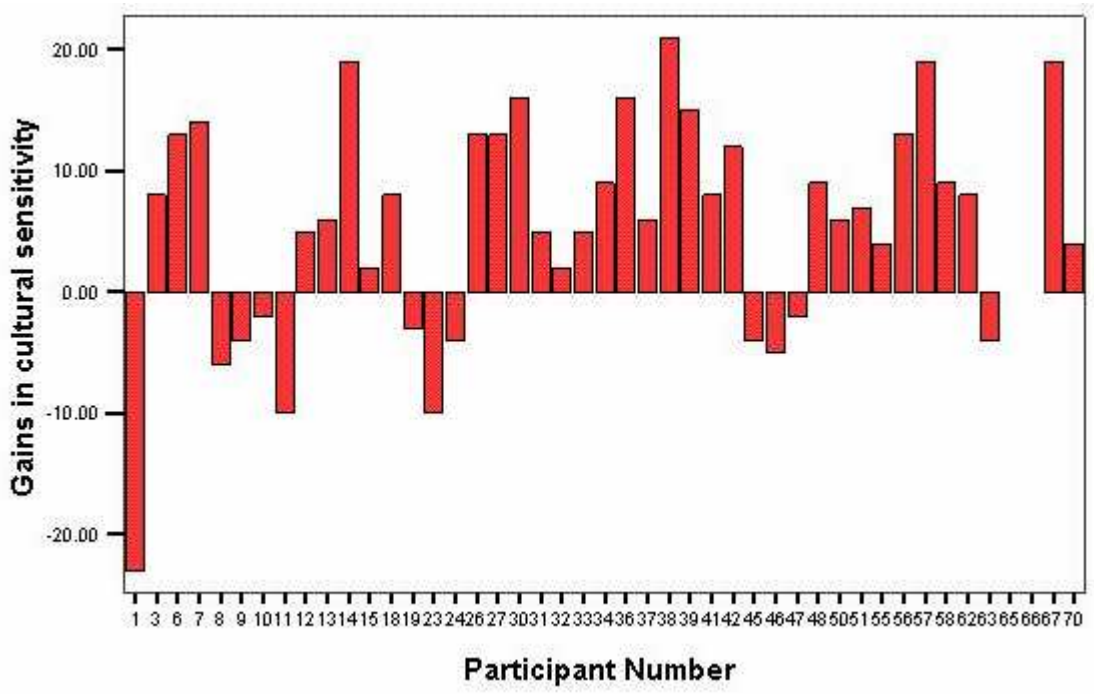


Figure 3 shows the gains scores as bars extending upward from zero for students whose scores increased and downward for those students whose scores decreased. The X-axis provides the case number indicating which participant's score is depicted directly above it. The Y-axis indicates the difference between the pre and post score for cultural sensitivity. Twelve students, roughly 27% of the 45 participants, demonstrated a decrease in cultural sensitivity and two students' scores showed no change before and after their time abroad. These results should be tempered by the fact that while

significant the overall increase was small, and many of the decreases were small as well. Despite, a high level of reliability for the ICCS, many of the smaller changes that students experienced, including some of the decreases, could be due to error in measurement.

In order to understand the variability in students' gains the researcher divided students' gain scores into two groups, those who scored above the median of 166 and those who scored below. The students in the low group scored an average of 7.3 points higher on the post-test, while students' in the high group notched an average 3.5 point gain. These numbers seem to indicate that students with lower initial scores seemed to gain more on average. However, it is not a simple case of diminishing gains among more culturally sensitive students. The high group actually showed a wider range of gains scores (range=42) than the low group (range=31) and a higher standard deviation. Table 3 provides a summary of these results.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for Gain scores by pre-scores of cultural sensitivity

		Low pre-cultural sensitivity	High pre-cultural sensitivity
N	Valid	21	24
	Missing	24	21
Mean		7.2857	3.5000
Median		8.0000	4.5000
Mode		6.00(a)	-4.00
Std. Deviation		7.88760	9.92581
Variance		62.214	98.522
Range		31.00	42.00
Minimum		-10.00	-23.00
Maximum		21.00	19.00
Percentiles	33.33333333	5.3333	-1.3333
	66.66666667	11.0000	8.0000

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The difference of over two points between the standard deviations of the high and low groups, 9.93 and 7.9 respectively, suggests that students with higher initial scores on the pre-test of cultural sensitivity experienced a broader range of changes in their cultural sensitivity, both positive and negative, than students' with lower initial scores.

In summary, as a group students who participated in this short-term program tended to experience a small increase in their level of cultural sensitivity. The results show that student improved on average just over five points after their time abroad. However, there was a wide range of outcomes within this overall trend of improvement, with a few students showing a decrease in scores that were not easily attributable to errors in measurement. Students who scored higher than average on the pre-test as a group seemed more prone to experience both decreases and increases in their levels of cultural sensitivity.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 2.

What changes do students experience in their oral language skills during short-term study abroad?

This question was addressed by analyzing data from the pre and post results of the test of oral language skills. Descriptive statistics for pre and post measures, as well as gain scores are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics-Oral Language Skills

	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error Difference between Means	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pre-oral lang.	45	1.90	1.30	3.20	2.4667	.04812	.32281	.104
Post-oral lang.	45	2.30	1.80	4.10	2.7733	.06643	.44564	.199
Gains-oral lang.	45	1.55	-.50	1.05	.3067	.05339	.35812	.128

Prior to going abroad students' mean score for oral language skills was 2.47 on a scale of 4.6. After their time abroad students' average score rose to 2.77. This indicates a small overall improvement of .31. These scores might be interpreted as a move from intermediate low to almost intermediate-mid along the ACTFL guidelines. For example, on the pre-test of the test of oral language skills many students were able to perform the first task of describing the homes they grew up in although with pauses and frequent grammar errors. However, they often ran into trouble with the second task of explaining to a professor why they missed a test and asking for a retake. On the post-test most students were even more comfortable with the first task. They had also made some improvement with the second task, but still lacked the vocabulary to talk about their

experience and the grammar, particularly the past tense, necessary to make their narrative clear. These results were analyzed using a paired samples t-test to compare the mean of the pre-test scores to the mean of the post-test scores. As stated earlier, the mean oral language scores for students before going abroad was 2.47 and after going abroad was 2.77. The T-test results were as follows; the Paired Differences mean was .31 with a t-value of 5.744 which was significant at the $p<.001$ level (see Appendix 1j-Oral Language Skills Results). This finding indicates that the difference between the mean pre-score and mean post-score was significant. These results further underscore that this group of students as a whole experienced modest yet significant improvements in their oral language skills over the course of their brief stay abroad.

The results thus far in this section focus on group trends. Table 5 focuses on individuals by offering the actual scores each student received before going abroad and upon completion of the program, as well as the difference between these scores. The table is organized in such a way that gains are listed from largest to smallest. As with scores for cultural sensitivity, a number is provided for the scores of each participant so that readers can compare the scores of each participant throughout the study.

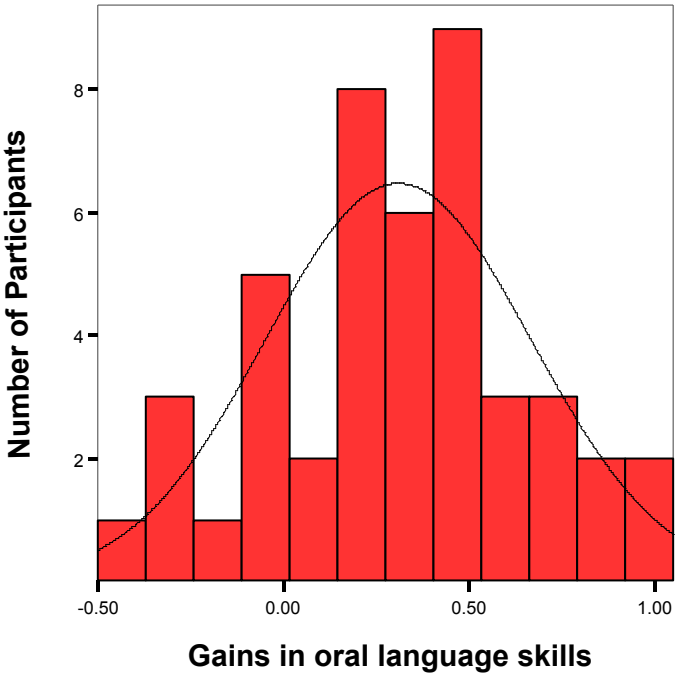
Table 5. Individual Participants' Pre, Post and Gains scores for oral language skills

Participant Number	Pre-oral lang.	Post-oral lang.	Gains-oral lang.
6	2.75	3.80	1.05
1	2.25	3.25	1.00
24	2.40	3.30	0.90
23	3.20	4.10	0.90
55	2.35	3.10	0.75
70	2.35	3.10	0.75
11	2.50	3.20	0.70
13	2.45	3.00	0.55
33	2.25	2.80	0.55
31	2.10	2.65	0.55
36	2.80	3.30	0.50
9	2.70	3.20	0.50
66	2.20	2.70	0.50
63	1.30	1.80	0.50
14	2.70	3.15	0.45
65	2.55	3.00	0.45
41	2.45	2.90	0.45
37	2.35	2.80	0.45
7	1.90	2.35	0.45
27	2.75	3.15	0.40
51	2.45	2.85	0.40
42	2.45	2.80	0.35
67	2.30	2.65	0.35
32	2.95	3.25	0.30
38	2.10	2.40	0.30
34	2.20	2.45	0.25
45	2.55	2.75	0.20
12	2.30	2.50	0.20
58	2.30	2.50	0.20
46	2.80	2.95	0.15
8	2.65	2.80	0.15
48	2.65	2.80	0.15
47	2.60	2.75	0.15
30	2.35	2.45	0.10
57	2.00	2.10	0.10
3	2.10	2.10	0.00
50	2.65	2.60	-0.05
39	2.55	2.45	-0.10
19	3.00	2.90	-0.10
62	2.65	2.55	-0.10
15	2.65	2.50	-0.15
10	2.45	2.20	-0.25
26	2.60	2.30	-0.30
56	2.60	2.25	-0.35
18	2.80	2.30	-0.50

Similar to the data regarding cultural sensitivity, the raw scores demonstrate a general trend toward small improvements in oral language skills from pre to post-test, but also indicate that there was a wide range of changes in students' skills. Gain scores ranged from a decrease of -.50 to an increase of 1.05. As noted in the results regarding gains in cultural sensitivity, some of the smaller changes could be due to error in measurement.

Figure 4 gives more insight regarding this phenomenon by indicating the number of students who experienced a certain amount of change between the pre and post-test of oral language skills.

Figure 4. Histogram of Gains in oral language skills



In Figure 4 the X-axis represents the gain scores and the Y-axis indicates the number of students who scored at that level. These gain scores appear to be evenly

distributed. As mentioned previously, there is a trend toward a significant, small increase in skills. This can be seen in Figure 5 by the number of students' whose scores appear to the right of 0.00. However, students experienced a wide range of outcomes. Some students experienced large gains of up to +1.05, some moderate gains and a large percentage, 22% either remained the same or earned lower scores on their post-test than on their pre-test. After examining the distribution of scores, students' gains could be termed, high, moderate, low and no gains or negative gains as summarized in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Gains in oral language skills grouped from largest to smallest gains

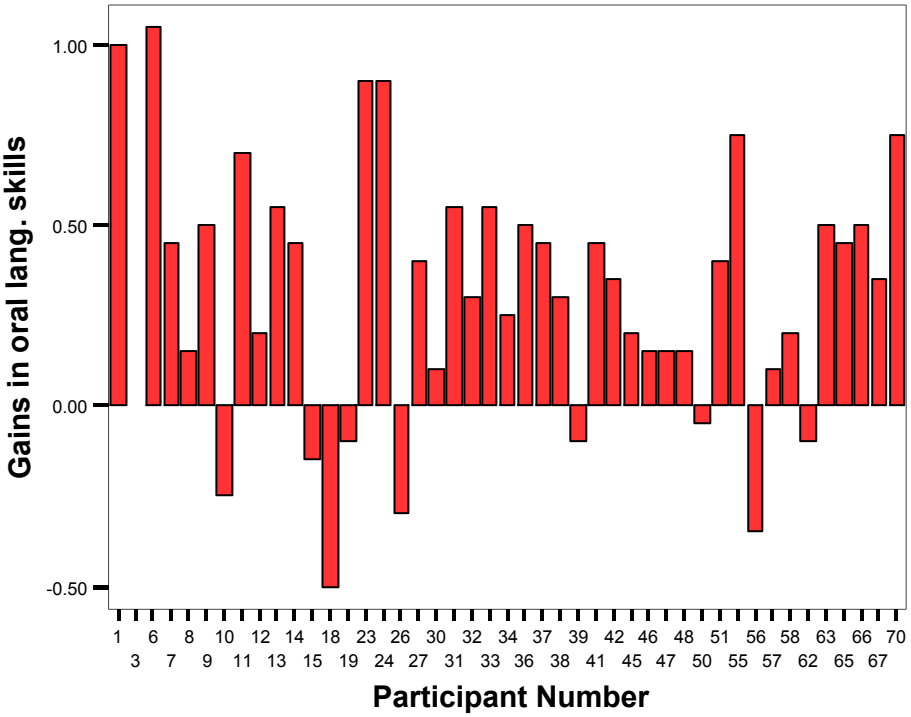
High Gains, N=7	**1.05 to .70**
Moderate Gains, N=18	**.55 to .30**
Low or No Gains, N=10	**.25 to .00**
No or Negative Gains, N=10	**.0 to -.5**

Figure 5 indicates that 7 students fell into the category of high gains by scoring 1.05 to .7 points higher at the end of their time abroad than at the beginning, moderate gainers were the largest group (n=18) and improved between .55 and .3 points. The 11 students in the low or no gains group showed increases of only .25 to .00, while the

negative gainers either decreased from -.05 to -.50. It was surprising to find that such a large percentage of students demonstrated a decrease in their scores since it is assumed that students who go abroad would make at least some minor improvement in their language skills. These results, however, should be tempered by knowing that some of the small changes, whether positive or negative, may be due to regression to the mean.

Figure 6 provides another look at the differences between students' pre and post-test scores on the test of oral language skills using a bar graph.

Figure 6. Gains in oral language skills



The Y-axis depicts students' gain scores as bars extending upward from zero for students whose scores increased and downward for those students whose scores decreased. The X-axis provides the case number indicating which participant's score is depicted directly above it. Nine students demonstrated a decrease in oral language skills

and one student's score was identical before and after the period abroad. This means that approximately 22% of the students who participated showed a decrease in their oral language skills or showed no improvement. These numbers are similar to the changes students' experienced in their level of cultural sensitivity where approximately 27% of the participants showed a decrease between pre and post- program scores. This trend is somewhat surprising since participation in study abroad is thought to greatly enhance students' language skills, particularly speaking skills, which are measured here. However, most of the changes are small and do not represent a dramatic change in students' skills.

In order to understand the variability in students' gains the researcher divided students' gain scores into two groups, those who scored above the median of 2.45 and those who scored at or below the median, as was done previously. The students' in the low group scored an average of .41 points higher on the post-test, while students' in the high group notched an average gain of .20. This indicates that students with lower initial scores seemed to gain more on average. However, as was the case with gains in cultural sensitivity it does not appear to be a simple case of diminishing gains among students who began their study abroad experience at a more advanced level. The high group actually showed a wider range of gain scores (range=1.55) than the low group (range=1.25) and a higher standard deviation. Table 6 provides a summary of these statistics.

Table 6. Descriptive stats. for Gain scores by pre-scores for oral lang. skills

		High pre oral lang.	Low pre oral lang.
N	Valid	22	23
	Missing	23	22
Mean		.2000	.4087
Median		.1500	.4500
Mode		.15	.45(a)
Std. Deviation		.39791	.28828
Variance		.158	.083
Range		1.55	1.25
Minimum		-.50	-.25
Maximum		1.05	1.00
Percentiles	33.33333333	-.0667	.3000
	66.66666667	.4167	.5000

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The standard deviation of scores in the high group was .397 and the low group reached .288. This difference suggests that students with higher initial scores on the pre-test of cultural sensitivity experienced a broader range of changes in their oral language skills, both positive and negative, than students' with lower initial scores.

Overall these results show that as a group the students in this program experienced a small yet significant improvement in their oral language skills. At the same time, individual students experienced a variety of outcomes with a sizeable number even showing a decrease in their oral language skills from pre to post-test. Much of the variability in gains is seen among students who scored above the mean on the pre-test. This is a similar pattern to that seen in the results of cultural sensitivity, with the real surprise being that a few students may have experienced a decrease in their oral skills after their time abroad that was not due to regression to the mean.

4.4 RQ 3.

What changes do students experience in motivational intensity during their study abroad program?

This question was addressed with data from the pre and post-tests of the Survey of Motivational Intensity. The descriptive statistics for the pre and post-tests, as well as gain scores are summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics-Motivational intensity

	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error Difference between Means	Std. Dev.	Variance
Pre-motivation	45	16	20	36	29.31	.573	3.842	14.765
Post-motivation	45	15	21	36	30.47	.592	3.969	15.755
Gains-motivation	45	14.00	-6.00	8.00	1.1556	.46597	3.12581	9.771

Before going abroad students' average score for motivational intensity was 29.31 on a scale with a minimum score of 9 and a maximum score of 36. The average score on the post-test was 30.47 indicating an overall increase in the group's intensity of motivation to learn Spanish. To further analyze changes in the group as a whole, data were analyzed using a paired samples t-test. The T-test results were as follows; the Paired Differences mean was 1.156 with a t-value of 2.480 which was significant at the p=.017 level (see Appendix 1 Table C – Motivational Intensity). This indicates the average gain among students of 1.2 points was not due to chance and also indicates a similar pattern to that seen in the previous variables, small yet significant improvements in the group as a whole.

Table 8 provides a glimpse of the changes that occurred in the individual participants. It depicts the actual scores from the survey of motivational intensity that students received before going abroad and upon completion of the program, as well as the difference between these scores. As with scores for cultural sensitivity and oral language skills, a number is provided for the scores of each participant so that readers can compare the scores of each participant throughout the study. In Table 8 gains in motivation are presented from largest to smallest.

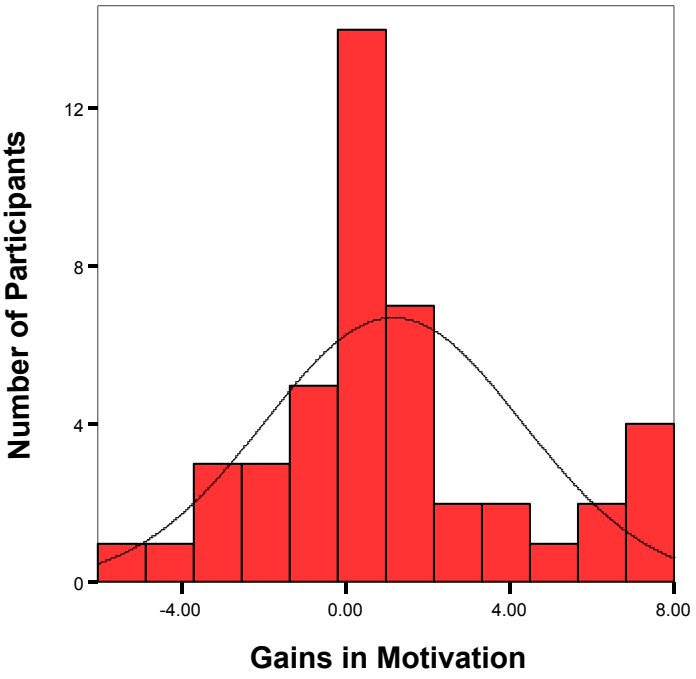
Table 8. Individual Participants' Pre, Post and Gains scores for motivational intensity

Participant Number	Pre-motivation	Post-motivation	Gains-motivation
63	23	31	8.00
36	27	34	7.00
55	27	34	7.00
1	25	32	7.00
67	28	34	6.00
70	28	34	6.00
15	31	36	5.00
14	30	34	4.00
51	26	30	4.00
58	29	32	3.00
57	26	29	3.00
56	34	36	2.00
48	33	35	2.00
27	32	34	2.00
13	30	32	2.00
26	29	31	2.00
34	28	30	2.00
10	23	25	2.00
30	33	34	1.00
18	31	32	1.00
50	31	32	1.00
38	27	28	1.00
45	27	28	1.00
19	26	27	1.00
42	21	22	1.00
3	20	21	1.00
6	35	35	0.00
9	35	35	0.00
65	32	32	0.00
23	30	30	0.00
31	29	29	0.00
41	29	29	0.00
8	34	33	-1.00
12	34	33	-1.00
32	34	33	-1.00
33	33	32	-1.00
47	28	27	-1.00
62	34	32	-2.00
46	30	28	-2.00
11	23	21	-2.00
24	36	33	-3.00
39	31	28	-3.00
7	28	25	-3.00
37	28	24	-4.00
66	31	25	-6.00

The data in Table 8 demonstrate a general trend toward small improvements in motivational intensity from pre to post-test, but with many students showing a wide variety of gains including some students whose motivation to learn Spanish actually showed a decrease after their participation in the study abroad program.

Figure 7 depicts the difference between each student's score before and after going abroad. Figure 7 shows that the mean score is to the right of 0.00, highlighting the small overall increase in scores from pre to post test. Students' gains ranged from +8 to -6.

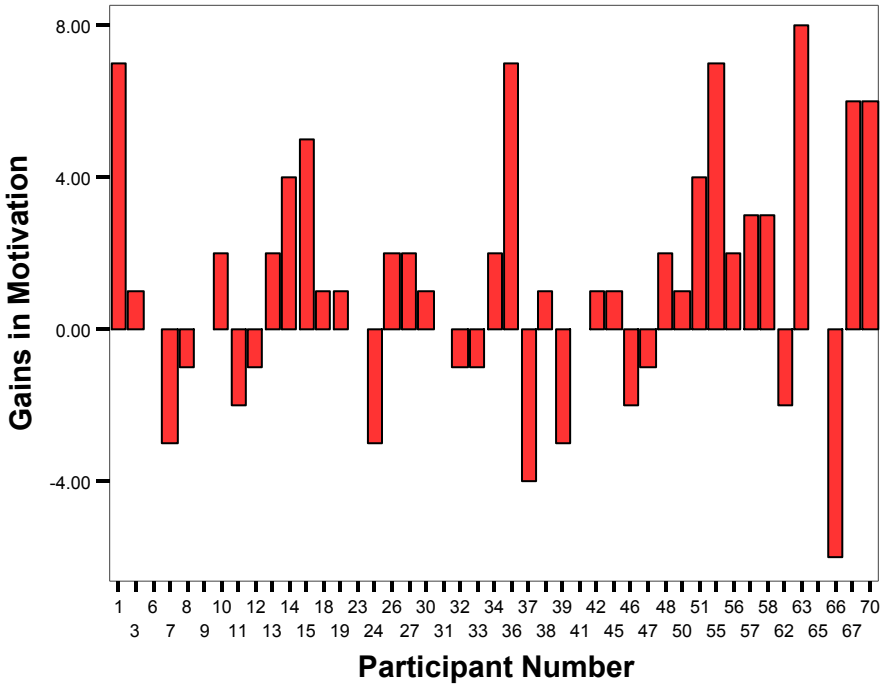
Figure 7. Histogram of Gains in motivation



This range of gains presented in Figure 7 underscores the pattern of small increases in scores from pre to post measures, but with a variety of outcomes as was seen in the gains scores of cultural sensitivity and oral language skills.

Figure 8 below depicts the differences between students' pre and post scores on the test of oral language skills.

Figure 8. Gains in motivation



The Y-axis depicts the score as a bar extending upward from zero for students whose scores increased and downward for those students whose scores decreased. The X-axis provides the case number indicating which participant's score is depicted directly above it. Thirteen students demonstrated a decrease in motivation and six students' scores were identical before and after their period abroad. It is important to be cautious in interpreting these results since the overall gain for the group was small and many of the changes students demonstrated could be due to error in measurement.

In order to understand the variability in the changes students experienced in their motivational intensity the researcher divided students' gain scores into two groups, those

who scored above the median of 29 and those who scored below. The students in the low group scored an average of 2.26 points higher on the post-test than the pre-test. On the other hand the high group made an average gain of 0.00.

This indicates that students scoring above the mean seemed less likely to improve their motivation to learn Spanish than students with lower initial scores. However, the standard deviation for the high group was 2.45, indicating that even though the mean gain for the group was 0.00; many students did experience gains of several points. Unlike the corresponding data for cultural sensitivity and oral language skills, the high pre-test group did not have a higher standard deviation than the low pre-test group (S.D. = 3.35). Data on changes in motivation among high and low initial scorers is summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for Gain scores grouped by pre-scores for motivation

		Low pre motivation	High pre motivation
N	Valid	23	22
	Missing	22	23
Mean		2.2609	.0000
Median		2.0000	.0000
Mode		1.00	-1.00(a)
Std. Deviation		3.34688	2.44949
Variance		11.202	6.000
Range		12.00	11.00
Minimum		-4.00	-6.00
Maximum		8.00	5.00
Percentiles	33.33333333	1.0000	-1.0000
	66.66666667	3.0000	1.0000

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Similarly, the high group also showed a smaller range of scores (r=11) than students in the low group (r=12). This shows that students' changes in levels of motivational intensity did not follow the pattern present in other variables, specifically,

more variation in the changes in motivation among students with higher initial scores. It appears that those with higher initial motivation scores did experience smaller gains overall and that they varied less from one another in the changes that they did experience. This pattern seems to fit somewhat with the pattern of changes in motivation seen in prior study abroad research. As shown in the literature review, the only study to look at the effect of participation in a study abroad program on motivation has shown that the intensity of students' motivation to learn the language does not increase or decrease significantly (Masgoret and Gardner, 2000). In this study there was a significant increase in motivation, but the increase was small. Some research has been done on changes in the kind of motivation that participation in study abroad precipitates (Allen and Herron, 2003). It has shown that the orientation of students' motivation generally changes very little over the course of their participation. However, students' varied widely in the changes that they experienced, which may have been why it was hard to detect an overall pattern. Similarly, in this study there was a wide range of changes among students with only a small increase for the group.

In summary, this study shows that students' motivation on the whole did increase slightly, that students with lower initial scores tended to make more gains than students with higher initial scores and that students experienced a wide range of outcomes with some even experiencing a decrease in their motivation to learn Spanish. In these ways students' changes in motivation seemed similar to changes in oral language skills and cultural sensitivity. Motivation differed from these variables in that high initial scorers did not vary more in their gains than lower initial.

4.5 RQ 4.

What is the relationship between changes in students' cultural sensitivity and changes in students' oral language skills during their time abroad?

This question was addressed by analyzing difference scores from the pre and post administrations of the Inventory of Cross Cultural Sensitivity, as well as the difference scores from the pre and post data from the test of Oral Language Skills. These data were analyzed using a Pearson product-moment correlation, which provides an indication of the strength of the relationship between two variables, in this case changes in students' cultural sensitivity and changes in students' oral language skills (Hatch and Lazaraton, 1991). The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Pearson correlation, variables; gains in cultural sensitivity and oral language skills.

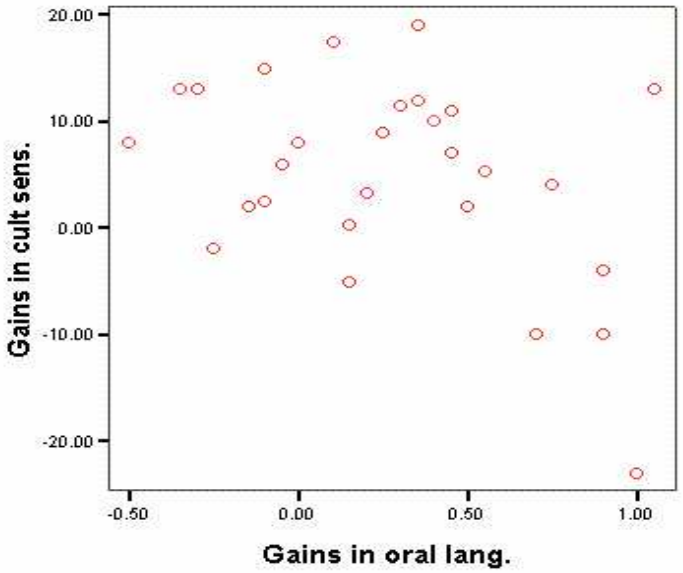
		Gains in cultural sensitivity
Gains in oral language skills	Pearson Correlation	-.301(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044
	N	45

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This analysis demonstrated a significant ($p<.05$) and negative relationship between gains in Cultural Sensitivity and gains in oral language skills with a Pearson's product-moment correlation of -.301. It is important to note that while significant this is a weak relationship, which is capable of explaining only approximately 9% of the variation seen in either of the variables.

Figure 9 provides a visual description of this relationship in the form of a scatter plot.

Figure 9. Scatter plot of gains in cultural sensitivity and gains in oral language skills



Here we can see a tendency for gains in cultural sensitivity to decrease as students' gains in oral language skills increase. This suggests that as students improve their oral language skills there is a slight tendency for students' cultural sensitivity to decrease.

4.6 RQ 5.

Does interaction with native speakers predict changes in motivational intensity in study abroad participants?

This question was addressed by analyzing difference scores from the pre and post administrations of the Survey of Motivational Intensity, as well as the difference scores from the pre and post-data from the Language Contact Profile. These data were analyzed using a Pearson product-moment correlation, which provides an indication of the strength of the relationship between two variables, in this case changes in students' motivation

and time spent interacting with native speakers during study abroad (Hatch and Lazaraton, 1991). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 11.

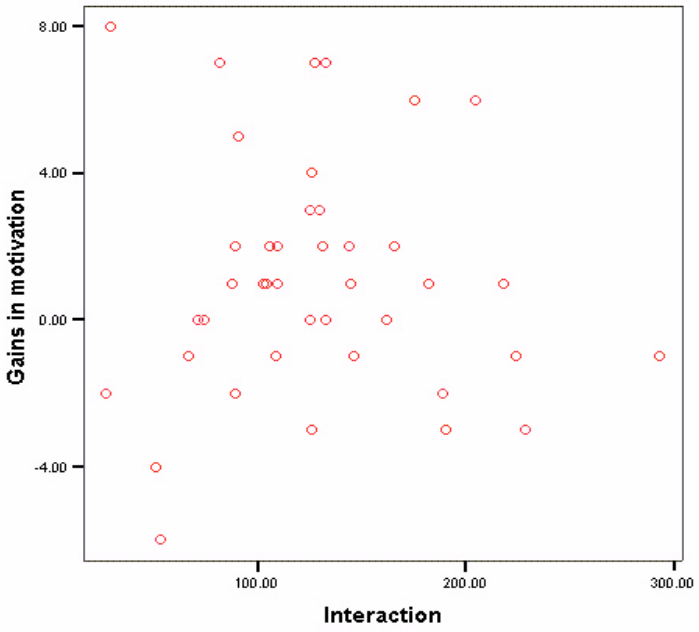
Table 11. Pearson product-moment correlation, variables; gains in motivation and interaction.

		Gains in motivation
Interaction	Pearson Correlation	-.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.765
	N	45

This analysis demonstrated a negative but insignificant ($p>.05$) relationship between gains in motivation and interaction with native speakers with a Pearson's product-moment correlation of -.046.

The relationship between these two variables is also demonstrated in the scatter plot in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Scatter plot of gains in motivation and interaction



This scatterplot shows the lack of a relationship between the two variables. This can be seen in the scores that tend towards each of the corners of the chart, with no obvious pattern emerging between the variables. This suggests that interacting with native speakers had no real bearing on increases in students' motivation to learn Spanish.

4.7 RQ 6.

Which of the following variables, cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and initial language level, predict interaction in the target language with native speakers?

This question was addressed by analyzing the pre-tests for cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity and language skill, the survey of host relationships and the survey of language contact.

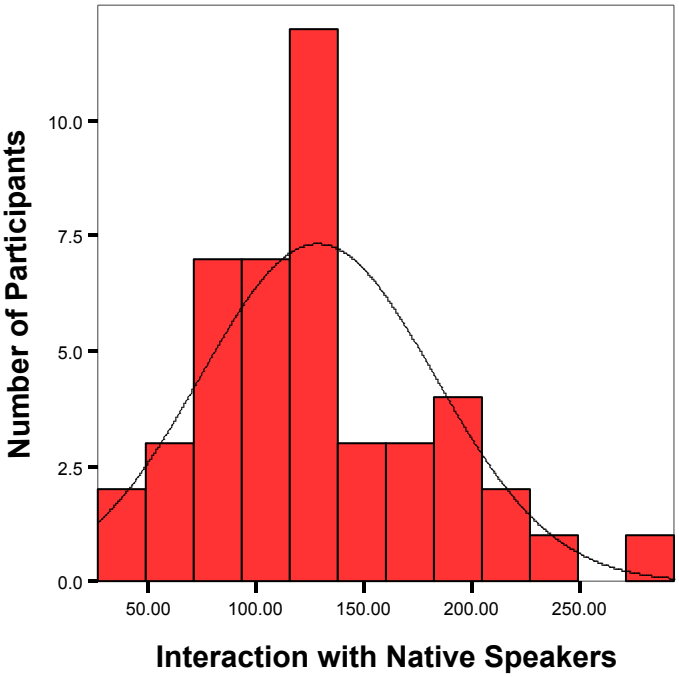
Descriptive statistics are provided here for the variables interaction with native speakers in Spanish and relationship with the host family, as well as histograms for all of the predictor variables mentioned above in order to assure that the variables meet the assumptions of normal distribution in order to be used in the multiple regression analyses. Table 12 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the variable interaction with native speakers.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics – Interaction with native speakers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interaction	45	27.00	293.50	128.2722	54.41206

Additionally, the range of possible scores for interaction with native speakers is 0-539. The distribution of scores for interaction with native speakers appears to be roughly even as demonstrated in the histogram in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Histogram of distribution of scores on the Language Contact Profile



Here we see that a large number of students scored between 100 and 150 on the survey of interaction with native speakers. Scores in this range comprise nearly 50% of the participants' responses. The nearly even distribution of the data indicates that these scores are suitable for the multiple regression analyses that were performed.

Table 13 below summarizes the descriptive statistics for the variable of host family relationship.

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics – Host family relationship

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Host family relationship	45	14.00	24.00	22.4000	2.30020

For the variable of host family relationship, the possible range of scores was seven to twenty four. The range of actual scores was from 14 to 24. The mean score for

relationship with the host family was 22.4 indicating that most students were very pleased with their relationship with their host family. However, scores from the survey of host family relationship tended towards the top of the scale. In fact, 21 out of 45 participants indicated the highest possible score of 24 for their relationship with their host family as seen in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Histogram of distribution of students' scores on survey of host family relationship

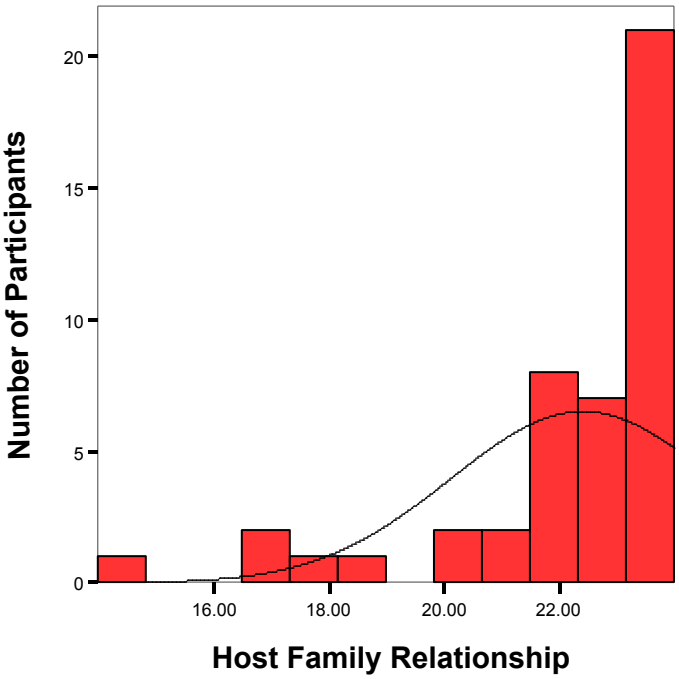
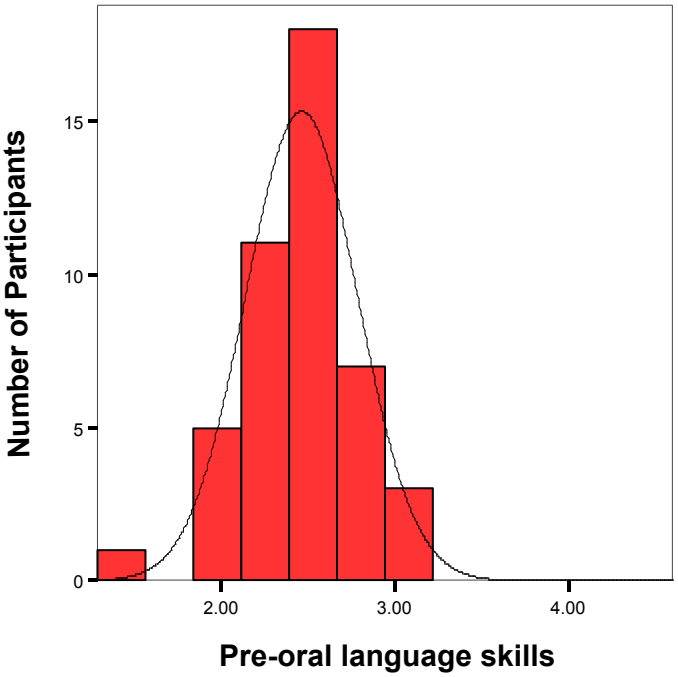


Figure 12 highlights the uneven distribution of these scores with nearly 47% of the participants scoring at the absolute upper limit of the scale. This uneven distribution means that these scores are not suitable for use in parametric measures such as multiple regressions.

In order to meet the assumptions of even distribution for variables used in multiple regression models, participants' scores from the survey of host family relationship were designated as either high or low with those in the high group given the score of one and those in the low group zero. The low group consisted of scores of 22 and below and the high group scores above 22. This redistribution of scores resulted in a low group made up of the scores of 17 participants and a high group containing the scores of 28 of the participants.

Figure13 depicts students' skills on the test of oral language skills prior to going abroad. The diagram indicates that pre-program scores were roughly even in their distribution, while still exhibiting a large degree of kurtosis with most students' scores centered on the mean.

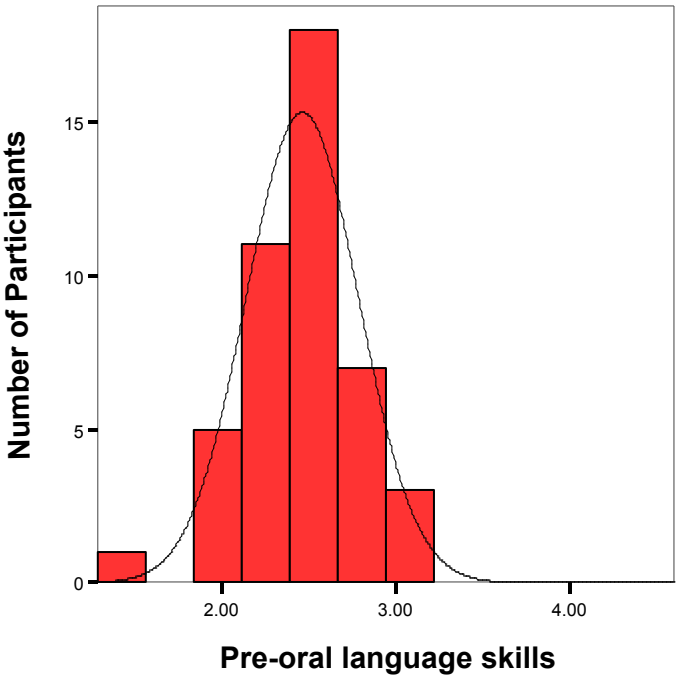
Figure 13. Histogram of the distribution of students' scores on the test of Oral Language Skills



This roughly even distribution indicates that scores from the pre-test of oral language skills meet the assumption of even distribution and can be used in the multiple regression analyses that follow.

Figure 14 depicts students' scores on the survey of motivational intensity prior to going abroad and demonstrates that the scores were fairly evenly distributed, though exhibiting a slight skew towards the top end of the scale.

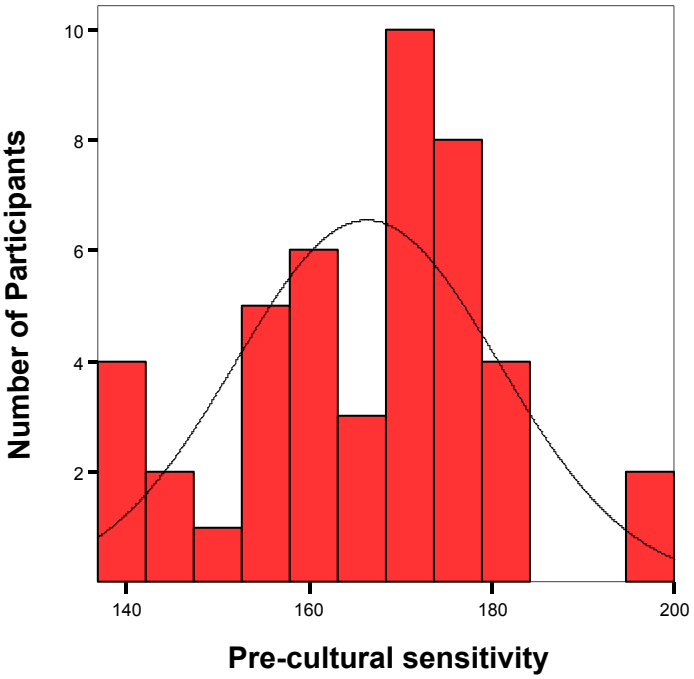
Figure 14. Histogram of distribution of students' scores on pre-test of motivational intensity



This roughly even distribution indicates that scores from the pre-test of oral language skills also meet the assumption of even distribution and can be used in the multiple regression analyses that follow.

Figure15 below depicts students' scores on the inventory of cross-cultural sensitivity prior to going abroad and demonstrates that the scores were fairly evenly distributed.

Figure 15. Histogram of the distribution of students' scores on the pre-test of cultural sensitivity



This roughly even distribution indicates that scores from the pre-test of oral language skills meet the assumption of even distribution and can be used in the multiple regression analyses that follow. This means that all of the variables proposed met the assumption of normal distribution for use in further analyses.

The use of multiple regressions also assumes that the relationships between the predictors and the criterion variable are linear and not curvilinear in nature. In order to

determine if the proper relationship existed between these variables, a type of regression was run to estimate the linearity or curvilinearity of the relationship between each of the predictor variables and the criterion variable. Only pre-test scores of motivational intensity showed that some curvilinearity could exist as summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Estimate of the curve-predictor variable: Interaction, Criterion variable: Pre-motivation

	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Linear	.143	7.186	1	43	.010
Quadratic	.202	5.325	2	42	.009

The R square numbers indicate a significant (p=.010) linear relationship between pre-program levels of motivational intensity and interaction with native speakers. However, in this estimation, the addition of the quadratic function increases the R square to .202 and provides a slight increase in significance level (p=.009). Since the addition of quadratic values may increase the R square and improve the significance level of the model produced by a multiple regression, the decision was made to include the quadratic form of pre-program levels of motivation in the analysis. In order to determine if this was actually the case, a separate regression analysis was performed, which will be presented after the initial multiple regression that used raw scores exclusively.

As a first step in understanding the relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable the correlations between each of the predictor variables and the criterion variable gains in oral language skills were calculated. Table 15 provides the correlation matrix containing the results of these analyses.

Table 15. Matrix of Correlations for all predictor variables and Criterion variable Interaction

		Pre-motivation	Pre-motivation squared	Pre-oral lang.	Pre-cult. sens.	Host family	Interaction
Pre-motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.997(**)	.400(**)	.303(*)	.231	.378(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.007	.043	.127	.010
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-motivation squared	Pearson Correlation	.997(**)	1	.393(**)	.311(*)	.224	.397(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.008	.038	.140	.007
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-oral lang.	Pearson Correlation	.400(**)	.393(**)	1	.170	.096	.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.008		.265	.532	.517
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-cult sens.	Pearson Correlation	.303(*)	.311(*)	.170	1	.176	.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.038	.265		.249	.559
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Host family	Pearson Correlation	.231	.224	.096	.176	1	.321(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.140	.532	.249		.032
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Interaction	Pearson Correlation	.378(*)	.397(**)	.099	.089	.321(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.007	.517	.559	.032	
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This matrix shows that pre-program levels of motivation showed the strongest correlation with interaction (R=.378) and the highest level of significance (p=.010), with relationship with the host family next (R=.321, p=.032), followed by pre-program language skills and pre-program cultural sensitivity with R values of .099 and .089 respectively which did not meet significance at the .05 level. This would suggest that motivation and relationship with host family would be able to predict a percentage of students' interaction with native speakers.

Next, these data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis, which provides information regarding the relationship between a criterion variable, in this case interaction with native speakers and two or more predictor variables. It also provides an estimate of the magnitude and significance of the relationships between each of the variables (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996). Further, since there is currently no theoretical basis within the study abroad literature for predicting students' level of interaction with native speakers, the variables were entered using step-wise regression, which allows the computer to calculate which variables contribute significantly to predicting the criterion variable (Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996). This analysis yielded the model that is summarized below in Table 16. Table 17 provides a summary of the variables that were excluded from the model.

Table 16. Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis, Criterion variable: Interaction.

Predictor Variable	R	R square	Probability
Pre-motivation	.378	.143	.010

Table 17. Variables that did not meet level of significance to enter the regression model, Criterion variable: Interaction

Predictor Variables	Partial Correlation	Probability
Host Family	.259	.090
Pre-oral language skills	-.061	.693
Pre-cultural sensitivity	-.029	.853

In the model produced by this analysis only pre-motivation was able to meet significance and enter the model. Pre-motivation yielded an R square of .143 with an F value of 7.186. The model was significant at the .05 level (p=.010). This means that the single variable of motivational intensity accounts for approximately 14% of the variation in the amount of interaction with native speakers that students reported and that there is only a slight possibility that statistically the results are due to chance.

This data suggests that the variable pre-program motivation is a reasonably good predictor of students' interaction with native speakers during study abroad programs. This statement is based on the strength of the correlation between this variable and interaction with native speakers, as well as the R square and significance of the model that contains these two variables. Interestingly, Relationship with host family did not enter as a predictor despite having a reasonably strong and significant correlation with the criterion variable interaction ($r=.321$, $p<.05$). This is likely due to overlap in the part of the variation that is accounted for by motivation and relationship with host family. Because of this, relationship with host family could still be considered a predictor of interaction with native speakers, but not as powerful as students' initial level of motivation prior to beginning their program abroad.

On the other hand, pre-program oral language skills and pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity have weak, insignificant correlations with the criterion variable interaction and consequently could not be included in the overall model as predictors of students' interaction with native speakers. Therefore, the data suggests that these variables are poor predictors of students' interaction with native speakers while studying abroad.

However, as mentioned previously, an estimate of the curve determined that the relationship between pre-motivation and interaction might be more accurately described as curvilinear. In order to determine if this is the case, another regression was performed in which pre-motivation was entered first and the squared values of pre-motivation were entered second. This would determine whether or not there was an increase in R square when the squared values were entered and indicate if the change in R square was

significant. If the change in the R square were significant then the relationship between pre-motivation and interaction could be more accurately described as curvilinear. Table 18 provides the results of this analysis.

Table 18. Results of the multiple regression analysis comparing use of linear and curvilinear analyses. Criterion variable: interaction

Model	Predictor variables	R	R square	R square change	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. of F Change
1	Pre-motivation	.378	.143	.143	50.948	.010
2	Pre-motivation and Pre-motivation squared	.450	.202	.059	49.74	.085

This analysis produced two models. The first contains the single predictor variable of pre-motivation and shows, as did the prior regression, that pre-motivation provides an R square of .143. The second model produced by this regression analysis indicates that the addition of the squared values of pre-motivation increased the R square from .143 in model 1 to .202. However, this increase in the R square was not significant as indicated by the box titled "Sig. F change" to the far right of Table 21.

While an improvement in the R square value of .059 is noteworthy, the increase is not significant. Therefore, the relationship between pre-motivation and interaction cannot be described as curvilinear.

In summary, the inclusion of pre-program levels of motivation in the model as a predictor of interaction with native speakers fits with the only other study in the author's review of literature, which examined the role of motivation in language learning during study abroad. As mentioned in chapter 2, Isabelli (2001) found that students who expressed that they were highly motivated prior to participating in study abroad entered

into social networks with native speakers, which she concluded led to improvements in their language skills.

Likewise, the positive correlation between the quality of a student's relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers is in some respects unsurprising given that members of the host family are generally the most convenient native speakers for students to interact with.

The results presented here indicate that among the variables in question, students' pre-program levels of motivation were easily the best predictor of how much students interacted with native speakers while abroad lending support to previous work that found that students with more motivation to learn the target language while abroad tended to interact with native speakers more than the less motivated students. Also, students' relationship with their host family showed some bearing on how much time students reported interacting with native speakers, even though motivation remained the strongest predictor and the only variable whose relationship with interaction was significant enough to be included in the regression model.

4.8 RQ 7.

Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity, oral language skills, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in oral language skills?

This question was addressed by analyzing the pre-tests for cultural sensitivity and motivational intensity, the survey of host relationship and the survey of language contact and the difference scores from the test of Oral Language Skills. As with the previous question, this data was analyzed using a multiple regression analysis, but in this case the

criterion variable was gains in oral language skills. Also, the assumption of normal distribution was met for all of these variables as described in the presentation of the results for the previous questions.

In order to determine if the assumption of linearity was met a separate analysis of the curvature of the relationship between each of the predictor variables and the criterion variable were performed. The results indicated that only one of the predictor variables, pre-cultural sensitivity, had the possibility of significant curvature in its relationship with the criterion variable oral language skills. Table 19 provides the results of the estimation of the curve.

Table 19. Estimate of the curve-Predictor variable: oral language skills, Criterion variable: Pre-cultural sensitivity

	R square	F	df1	df2	Probability
Linear	.112	5.416	1	43	.025
Quadratic	.191	4.959	2	42	.012

These results indicate that it is possible that the relationship between pre-cultural sensitivity and gains in oral language skills may be described more accurately using quadratic or curvilinear data, as was the case with pre-motivation and interaction in the previous question. In order to determine if this was actually the case, a separate regression analysis was performed, which will be presented after the initial multiple regression that used raw scores exclusively.

As a first step in understanding the relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable the correlations between each of the predictor variables and the criterion variable, gains in oral language skills, were calculated. Table 20 provides the correlation matrix with the results of these analyses.

Table 20. Gains in Oral Language Skills

		Pre-motivation	Pre-oral lang.	Host family	Interaction	Pre-cult sens.	Pre-cult sens. squared	Gains - oral lang.
Pre-motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.400**	.231	.378*	.303*	.311*	-.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007	.127	.010	.043	.037	.992
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-oral lang.	Pearson Correlation	.400**	1	.096	.099	.170	.172	-.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007		.532	.517	.265	.258	.337
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Host family	Pearson Correlation	.231	.096	1	.321*	.176	.178	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.532		.032	.249	.243	.790
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Interaction	Pearson Correlation	.378*	.099	.321*	1	.089	.088	-.211
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.517	.032		.559	.564	.165
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-cult sens.	Pearson Correlation	.303*	.170	.176	.089	1	.998**	.334*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.265	.249	.559		.000	.025
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-cult sens. squared	Pearson Correlation	.311*	.172	.178	.088	.998**	1	.351*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.258	.243	.564	.000		.018
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Gains-oral lang.	Pearson Correlation	-.002	-.146	.041	-.211	.334*	.351*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.992	.337	.790	.165	.025	.018	
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This matrix shows that pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity showed the strongest correlation with gains in oral language skills (R=.344) and the highest level of significance (p=.025). None of the other variables demonstrated a significant relationship with the criterion variable gains in oral language skills. This suggests that pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity will turn out to be the best predictor of gains in oral language skills among the variables presented here. It is interesting to note that the amount of interaction that students reported having with native Spanish speakers did not bear a

significant relationship to the changes that students experienced in oral language skills. This seems counterintuitive given the abundant research that suggests that interaction in the target language is essential for improvement in the target language. Perhaps the regression analysis will provide more insight.

Since there is a theoretical basis that suggests that each of these variables should have some ability to predict the criterion variable, each of the variables was entered into the equation. Stepwise regression was used since it would allow the computer to determine which of the variables contributed significantly to the model's ability to predict the changes that students experienced in their oral language skills during their time abroad.

This analysis produced a significant model and revealed that only pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity contributed significantly to predicting language gains. Significance was reached at the .05 level (p=.025) and produced an R square of .112 and an F value of 5.416. None of the other variables reached significance at the .05 level and therefore were not allowed to enter the model as a true predictor of gains in oral language skills. These results are summarized in Tables 21 and 22.

Table 21. Results of multiple regression analysis, Criterion variable: Gains in oral language skills

Predictor Variable	R	R square	Probability
Pre-cultural sensitivity	.378	.143	.025

Table 22. Variables that did not meet level of significance to enter the regression model, Criterion variable: Gains in oral language skills

Predictor Variables	Partial Correlation	Probability
Interaction	-.256	.093
Pre-motivation	-.115	.459
Host family	-.066	.668

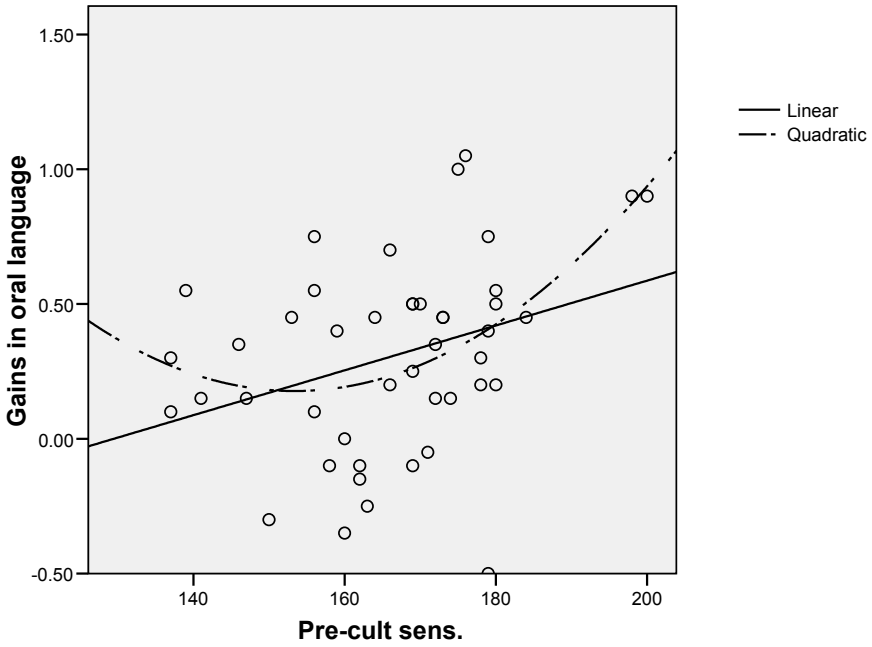
These results confirm what the correlation matrix suggested, that a student's pre-program level of cultural sensitivity was the only significant predictor of the changes a student would experience in their oral language skills. However, as mentioned earlier in this section, the curve estimation indicated the possibility of a curvilinear relationship between pre-cultural sensitivity and gains in oral language skills. In order to determine if a curvilinear description of the relationship was significantly better than the linear one just presented, another regression was performed in which the raw pre-cultural sensitivity scores were entered in the first step with the squared values of pre-cultural sensitivity entered in the second. The significance of the increase in R square will indicate which description of the data is more accurate. The statistics resulting from this regression are provided in Tables 23.

Table 23. Results of the multiple regression analysis comparing use of linear and curvilinear data. Criterion variable: Gains in oral language skills

Model	Predictor variables	R	R square	R square change	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. of F Change
1	Pre-cult sens.	.334	.112	.112	.3414	.025
2	Pre-cult sens. squared	.437	.191	.079	.3297	.049

The first model includes only the raw scores of pre-cult sensitivity and is therefore identical to the results from the initial regression performed to answer research question 8 and indicate what portion of the variance in gains in oral language skills is accounted for by a linear representation of the data. This model provides an R square of .112. Model 2 includes pre-cultural sensitivity and the squared values of pre-cultural sensitivity as a separate variable. The inclusion of the squared values increases the R square value from .112 to .191 an increase of .079. The statistic "Sig. F change" indicates that this increase is significant at the .05 level (p=.049). The overall significance of the model also improved from p=.025 to p=.012. The significance level of the change shows that characterizing the relationship between pre-cultural sensitivity and gains in oral language skills as curvilinear allows for significantly better prediction of the criterion variable than a linear characterization. Figure 16 provides a visual illustration using a scatter plot.

Figure 16. Scatter plot providing a comparison of linear and curvilinear analyses of relationship between pre-cultural sensitivity and gains in oral language skills



Comparing the two lines we see that the curved line representing the quadratic analysis comes slightly closer to more of the actual data points than the straight line representing the linear analysis. This provides another way of understanding how a curvilinear representation seems to provide a better fit for the relationship between these two variables.

In summary, the only significant predictor of gains in oral language skills according to this analysis was pre-program cultural sensitivity which when a curvilinear description is employed, can account for nearly 20% of the variance in the changes in students' oral language skills. The other important point demonstrated by this analysis is that interaction with native Spanish speakers was not a significant predictor of changes in students' oral language skills. Taken at face value, this contradicts much of the research

in second language acquisition and the widespread assumption that language learning in study abroad results from interacting with native speakers in Spanish.

4.9 RQ 8.

Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of motivation and oral language skills, students' relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in cultural sensitivity?

This question was addressed by analyzing, the pre-test scores for cultural sensitivity, oral language skills and motivational intensity, as well as the survey of host family relationship and the survey of language contact. As with the previous question, this data was analyzed using a multiple regression analysis, however, in this case the criterion variable is gains in cultural sensitivity.

Before proceeding with the regression analysis, it is necessary to assure that the assumptions of linear regression are met. The assumption of normal distribution was met for each of the variables as shown in the presentation of the results of the previous research questions. To test for the assumption of linearity, a curve estimation was performed using the statistics package SPSS. This determines if the relationship between a given predictor variable and the criterion variable could be described more completely as linear or curvilinear. The curve estimation only detected the possibility of significant curvilinearity between interaction and gains in cultural sensitivity. Table 24 provides the statistical results of this analysis.

Table 24. Estimate of the curve-Predictor variable: Interaction with Native Speakers, Criterion variable: Gains in Cultural Sensitivity

	R square	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Linear	.075	3.506	1	43	.068
Quadratic	.233	6.396	2	42	.004

This table shows an R square for the quadratic representation of the relationship as .233 with the linear representation being .075. This indicates that the quadratic or curvilinear representation of the data may be more accurate. For now we will proceed with the linear analysis, which provides a comparison of the linear relationships that do exist. Afterwards a separate analysis will be performed to take into account the curvilinear nature of the relationship between interaction and gains in cultural sensitivity and allow us to determine if in actuality the description of the relationship between these two variables is significantly improved by taking into account any curvature that may be present.

As an introduction to the relationship between each of the predictor variables and the criterion variable gains in cultural sensitivity the correlations between each of these variables was calculated. The results are displayed in Table 25.

Table 25. Matrix of Correlations for all predictor variables and criterion variable interaction

		Pre-motivation	Pre-oral lang.	Host family	Interaction	Pre-cult sens.	Gains-cult sens.
Pre-motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.400**	.231	.378*	.303*	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007	.127	.010	.043	.611
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-oral lang. skills	Pearson Correlation	.400**	1	.096	.099	.170	-.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007		.532	.517	.265	.424
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Host family	Pearson Correlation	.231	.096	1	.321*	.176	.181
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.532		.032	.249	.235
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Interaction	Pearson Correlation	.378*	.099	.321*	1	.089	.275
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.517	.032		.559	.068
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Pre-cult sens.	Pearson Correlation	.303*	.170	.176	.089	1	-.367*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.265	.249	.559		.013
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45
Gains-cult sens.	Pearson Correlation	.078	-.122	.181	.275	-.367*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.611	.424	.235	.068	.013	
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This matrix indicates that none of the predictors to be included in the multiple regression are significantly related to gains in cultural sensitivity. The most closely related is interaction with an R of .275 that nearly reaches significance at the .05 level (p=.068).

The predictor variable interaction with native speakers was entered into the regression analysis first since it has some theoretical basis for predicting changes in cultural sensitivity, followed in the next step by relationship with the host family, pre-program oral language skills and pre-program motivation. The analysis produced two

models one with interaction as the only variable and the other with all of the variables that were entered. These models are summarized in Tables 26 and 27.

Table 26. Results of multiple regression analysis, Criterion variable- Gains in cultural sensitivity

Predictor Variable	R	R square	Probability
Interaction	.275	.075	.068

Table 27. Variables that did not meet level of significance to enter the regression model, Criterion variable-Gains in cultural sensitivity

Predictor Variables	Partial Correlation	Probability
Pre-oral lang.	-.156	.311
Host family	.102	.851
Pre-motivation	-.029	.851

The first model resulted in an R square of .075 and nearly reached significance at the .05 level (p=.068). Adding the other variables in model two only provided a slight increase in prediction with an R square of .110 and decreasing the overall significance of the model to p=.367 with an F value of 1.238.

These results indicate that there were no significant predictors of students' gains in cultural sensitivity in this analysis. Interaction with native speakers, as suggested in the correlation matrix, came the closest and tended toward significance. Perhaps with more participants interaction would reach a higher level of significance.

However, in order to assure that these results were as accurate as possible, an analysis was performed to determine if the relationship between interaction and gains in cultural sensitivity would be better explained as curvilinear in nature. In order to do this,

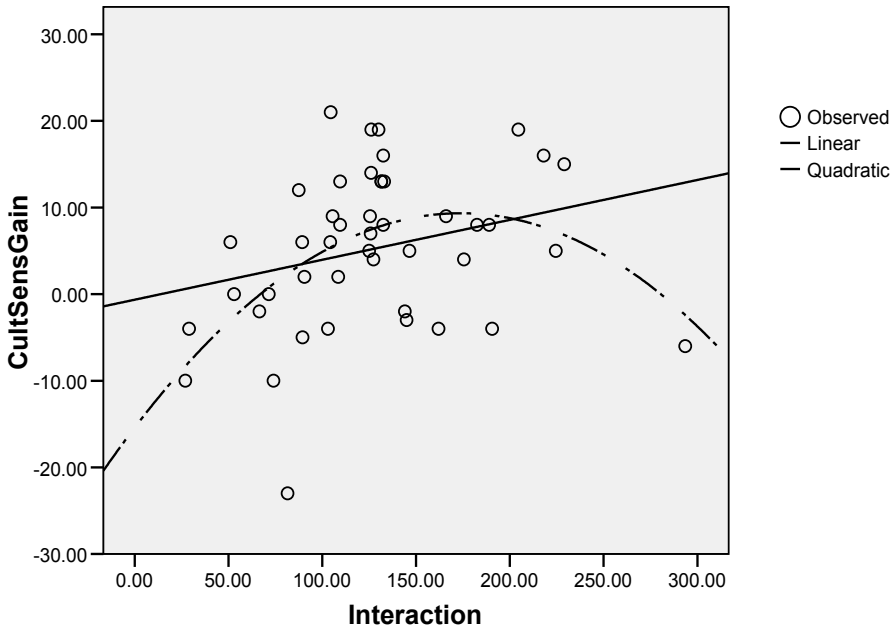
another analysis was performed in which the raw scores of interaction were entered. Then in the second step the squared values for interaction were entered as described in Table 28.

Table 28. Results of the multiple regression analysis comparing use of linear and curvilinear data. Criterion variable: Gains in cultural sensitivity

Model	Predictor variables	R	R square	R square change	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. of F Change
1	Interaction	.275	.075	.075	8.88432	.068
2	Interaction squared	.483	.233	.197	8.18511	.005

This analysis produced two models. Model one contains the raw scores of interaction as were entered in the previous regression analysis and yielded the same results, an R square of .075, which does not quite reach significance at the .05 level (p=.068). Model 2 shows interaction combined with its squared values. This yields a substantially higher R square of .233. This increase of .158 in the R square is significant at the .01 level (p=.005) and indicates that the curvilinear description is significantly better than the linear description. The inclusion of the squared values also causes the relationship between interaction and gains in cultural sensitivity to reach significance at the .01 level (p=.004). Figure 17 provides a visual illustration of the two analyses.

Figure 17. Scatter plot providing a comparison of linear and curvilinear analyses of relationship between interaction and gains in cultural sensitivity



Comparing the two lines we see that the curved line representing the quadratic analysis comes closer to more of the actual data points than the straight line representing the linear analysis. This provides another way of understanding how a curvilinear representation seems to provide a better fit for the relationship between the two variables.

The analysis presented here has shown that among the variables included in this analysis only interaction with native speakers is able to significantly predict the changes that students experienced in their cultural sensitivity after their time abroad. Consequently this analysis also suggests that students' oral language skills, motivation and relationship with their host family do not predict gains that students' will experience in cultural sensitivity during study abroad.

Interaction with native speakers' significant relationship with gains in cultural sensitivity is not surprising given that most of the research on cultural adjustment and sensitivity assumes that interaction with members of the host culture lays the foundation for increased sensitivity to other cultures. One of the interesting aspects is the curvilinear nature. This suggests that while there is evidence that as students interacted more they tended to make greater gains in cultural sensitivity, those who interacted the most did not necessarily make greater gains than those who interacted a moderate amount.

4.10 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

RQ 1. What changes do students experience in terms of cultural sensitivity during short-term study abroad?

On a scale of 32 to 224, students experienced on average a small but significant improvement of 5.2 points.

RQ 2. What changes do students experience in their oral language skills during short-term study abroad?

On a scale of 0 to 4.6, students experienced on average a small but significant improvement of .31 points, which is significant at the .01 level.

RQ 3. What changes do students experience in motivational intensity during their study abroad program?

On a scale of 9-36, students experienced on average a small but significant improvement of 1.2 points in their motivational intensity, which is significant at the .017 level.

RQ 4. What is the relationship between changes in students' cultural sensitivity and changes in students' oral language skills during their time abroad?

This study reported no significant relationship between changes in students' cultural sensitivity and changes in students' oral language skills.

RQ 5. Does interaction with native speakers predict changes in motivational intensity in study abroad participants?

Interaction with native speakers did not bear a significant relationship with changes in the intensity of students' motivation to learn Spanish during their time abroad.

RQ 6. Which of the following variables, cultural sensitivity, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and initial language level; predict interaction in the target language with native speakers?

Students' level of motivation prior to the program accounted for .143 of the variation seen in the amount of time students spent interacting with native speakers and was the only significant predictor.

RQ 7. Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity, oral language skills, motivational intensity, relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in oral language skills?

Students' pre-program level of cultural sensitivity demonstrated a significant curvilinear relationship with gains in oral language skills. Pre-program level of cultural sensitivity was the only significant predictor and accounted for approximately 19% of the variance shown in the gain scores for oral language skills.

RQ 8. Which of the following variables, pre-program levels of motivation and oral language skills, students' relationship with the host family and interaction with native speakers in Spanish predict gains in cultural sensitivity?

The amount of time students spent interacting with native speakers while abroad was the only significant predictor of gains in cultural sensitivity. Interacting with native

speakers and gains in cultural sensitivity showed a significant curvilinear relationship which accounted for approximately 23% of the variance in students' gains in cultural sensitivity.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study was guided by two main questions. The first question investigated possible reasons to explain why some students seemed to learn more than others during their participation in study abroad. The second focused on how much learning actually took place in short-term study abroad programs that have become increasingly popular over the years.

This chapter will provide a summary and discussion of the major findings of the study. It will also present pedagogical implications for practitioners in second language teaching involved in study abroad programs. The limitations of the study will be discussed and directions for future research recommended.

The discussion in this chapter will be organized in two parts, First there will be a discussion of the changes in specific variables. Then there will be a discussion of the relationship between these variables. These discussions will include the overall themes and patterns that have emerged from the analysis of the data.

5.2 CHANGES IN CULTURAL SENSITIVITY, ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS, AND MOTIVATION

Students' growth in three areas, cultural sensitivity, oral language skills and motivation, was measured using pre and post-tests. In each of these areas a striking pattern emerged. When the data were analyzed intragroup there was a minor, but significant increase in scores in all three of these areas from before the students

participated in the study abroad program and after its completion. However, the degree of improvement that students experienced varied widely in each of the areas. The difference between the mean scores on the pre and post-tests for oral language skills, cultural sensitivity, and motivation were all significant, but with large standard deviations. For example, the mean gain for oral language skills was an improvement of .3, but the standard deviation for gains in oral language skills was .36, which is larger than the mean gain. The range of gains scores also highlights the variety of outcomes that students experienced. Using oral language skills as an example, students improved as much as 1.05 while other students' oral skills actually showed a decrease as large as .50.

This wide range of outcomes was particularly pronounced among the students who began their program abroad with higher levels of cultural sensitivity or oral skills. Among these students the mean gains were somewhat smaller than among the other students, but advanced students tended to vary more from one another in the gains they made than students who started at a lower level. This pattern was less visible in the gains in motivation due to possible ceiling effects. However, even in motivation there was still a wide variety of outcomes in the group as a whole. Another explanation for the small changes in scores could error in measurement referring to the inability of the scale to measure the fine changes that may take place in short-term study abroad. This could be true for each of the scales throughout the study. Since much of the data included in this study relies on students' reports of their experiences or perceptions it is difficult to ascertain how much the scores reflect the reality of the areas measured. Students may have difficulty accurately identifying where they fit on a certain scale or may respond out

of a desire to please the researcher or others involved rather than provide as accurate a picture of themselves as possible.

At the same time the results of this study do corroborate with that of previous research, which lends some credence to the validity of the measures utilized here. The tendency for the group as a whole to improve somewhat, with large amounts of individual variation coincides with previous research on learning in study abroad. For example, Brecht et al (1993) found that approximately 80% advanced one level on the Oral Proficiency Interview and that 20% showed no improvement. Their results are very similar to the findings of this study where approximately 22% showed no improvement or a decrease in their oral language skills. Previous research employing a pre-post design to examine language learning in study abroad had either found little to no improvement in more advanced students or simply diminishing gains among those students who began at a higher level (Freed, 1995, Yager, 1998).

The results of this study contribute to our understanding of learning in study abroad among more advanced students by suggesting that improvement for advanced students may be more individualized than for beginning students. For students who begin at lower levels in their language skills everyday interactions typical of most experiences abroad will provide a predictable level of improvement, but with advanced students the improvements may require more effort or may require a different kind of experience. For example, students at lower levels who have not mastered basic everyday skills in the target language will benefit greatly from simply having to negotiate daily life while abroad, but there may be little need or opportunity to move beyond that level. For more advanced students who have already mastered the basic linguistic skills to perform these

types of activities there will be little gains. Consequently, students who go abroad with greater linguistic skills may have to seek out those specific learning opportunities which will encourage them to master more linguistically demanding tasks, like comparing and contrasting, speaking about academic and professional topics and other advanced and superior language acts, as stated in the ACTFL proficiency Guidelines.

However, the finding that some students' skills actually decrease after going abroad still requires some explanation. As mentioned in chapter 4, since the changes that many students experienced were small, it could be that some changes were due to regression to the mean. Also, this could be an indication of error in measurement due to the inability of the test to measure subtle changes in students' oral language skills. Even so, it is troubling to think that after the time and expense of traveling to a foreign country, attending classes, and presumably having contact with many speakers of the target language a student might be less proficient in the language than before the study abroad experience. What are some possible explanations for the finding that students' scores decreased?

The research in second language acquisition claims that learners of a 2nd/foreign language create their own mental grammars, which in basic terms is a student's best theory at a given time for understanding and producing the language. These mental grammars makeup what is called the students' interlanguage. This interlanguage grows and develops as students' understanding of the language matures (Gass and Selinker, 2001). However, the development of students' interlanguages is not completely linear, with students experiencing hills and valleys as they progress. For example, students will generate a hypothesis about how the language works. This hypothesis may cover some

of the variation in the language and allow the student to produce a certain structure correctly a percentage of the time, but as the student gains experience s/he will realize the limitations of their hypothesis and give it up. The student can be left without an alternate explanation for a period of time or temporarily adopt another theory of how the language works that is less helpful than the first. This may result in a phenomenon called backsliding where students' skills temporarily decrease for a period of time due to the process of rejecting one theory of how the language works while searching for another. A student who is in this process is in a sense making progress, but their visible skills may stagnate or diminish. This means that if students are tested while going through a period of backsliding they may be unable to demonstrate the progress that they have experienced (Gass and Selinker, 2001).

One of the most important aspects of this study is that the form of assessment that was used here was able to detect the smaller increases that occur during short-term programs. This is important since the forms of assessment used in previous research in study abroad had difficulty in detecting improvements that students made in their speaking skills in the target language during their time abroad, particularly among advanced students (Freed, 1995). However, the assessment used here was able to detect improvement among advanced students. The form of assessment here employed native speaker ratings to measure students' improvements, combined with a small amount of training and the use of a rubric describing what the nature of speech that would receive a particular rating.

This form of assessment developed from the work of Yager (1998), Higgs, (1984), Koren (1995), Okamura (1995). It is unique in that it uses only a few native-

speaker raters who received more guidance regarding the basis for a particular rating. Using fewer raters makes this form of assessment more feasible for researchers. Also, training and checking for agreement among raters resulted in a high level of inter-rater reliability. The ability to detect small gains in students' oral skills even among higher level students, and high level of reliability are important aspects of language assessment especially in study abroad research. With further refinement this assessment could become a useful tool for those interested in language learning in study abroad.

Following the trend mentioned previously, students' experienced a wide variety of outcomes in their cultural sensitivity with over 20% experiencing a decrease in their scores from the pre-test to the post-test but with a wide variety of outcomes overall especially among more advanced students. This could be explained in several ways.

Interestingly, research on cultural adjustment describes a process that parallels the up and down nature of linguistic improvement. Oberg (as cited in Spradley, J. & Philips, M., 1972) explains that those who spend time abroad experience several distinct phases as they adapt to their new environment. Prior to departing, there is a period of excitement and anticipation, often followed by a honeymoon phase where students and other sojourners are captivated by the exotic differences that they encounter. After this initial stage, many experience a decline in their feelings as the difficulty of cross-cultural living sets in. After a period of time the sojourners will begin to adjust, becoming more familiar with a different way of life, and often regaining some of the positive feelings toward the host culture with which they began their journey.

Also, people adjusting to a new culture may experience smaller episodes of this cycle within a larger pattern of adjustment. Like the process of backsliding that occurs in

linguistic skills, if students are tested before they have begun the upward climb of this U-shaped process, they may show a decrease in their cultural sensitivity even though they are on their way to a higher and more mature level of cultural understanding and sensitivity.

Another explanation for a decline in scores could be that while students may have had a very positive experience, they often come back with a much more realistic view of the difficulties of adjusting to and understanding other cultures. So even though they may have increased their sensitivity to other cultures, their hard earned insights could be manifested as a decrease in sensitivity, especially if their experience left them slightly more hesitant to venture abroad again.

The changes that students experience in their motivation are also curious. Overall students' experienced a slight increase in the intensity of their motivation to learn Spanish, but as was the case with changes in oral language skills and cultural sensitivity there was a wide range of outcomes and again, 20% experienced a decrease in their motivation after participating in the program abroad. This study contributes to the literature on study abroad since it is one of only two studies to look at the overall intensity of motivation instead of changes in the orientation of motivation after time abroad. Masgoret and Gardner (2000) found that students' motivation to learn the target language remained relatively unchanged after their time abroad. The significant increase in motivation found in this study contrasts with Masgoret and Gardner's findings.

However, Allen and Herron's (2003) conclusions may offer further insight into the results of this study. Their work examined the changes in orientation that students experienced after their sojourn abroad. The standard deviations for all of the motivation

scales administered at the end of the program were greater than the standard deviations of the pre-test using the same scales. They concluded that students' did experience changes in the orientation of their motivation, but varied immensely in the quality and quantity of their changes. They concluded that this variation made it extremely difficult to find a single pattern in the way the group's motivation changed.

A similar explanation may apply to the findings in this study. While the results do indicate a small but significant overall improvement in students' motivation to learn Spanish, there was also a large standard deviation in gain scores, 3.13 with some students increasing as much as 8 points and others decreasing by as much as -6 points.

The results for motivational intensity are further complicated by the fact that many students' motivation had declined by the end of the program. As was the case with oral language skills, and cultural sensitivity, some of the decreases in motivation could be due to regression to the mean especially since the net increase for the group was small. At the same time, the idea that some students come back from their study abroad experience less motivated to learn the target language needs some explanation. It seems possible that a decrease in students' motivation could stem from the way that students view their program in their overall goals for learning Spanish. Study abroad is often touted at the best way to learn a 2nd/foreign language students and little emphasis is placed on how students can continue to learn after study abroad. Because of this students may view their time abroad as the capstone of their efforts to learn the target language, especially for non-majors or students who will be graduating shortly after completing their program. Students who take this view may express a decrease in motivation, feeling that they have taken all reasonable steps to further their learning.

Two other attitudes may contribute to a decrease in motivation after students go abroad. One is the prevalent attitude that all that is really important is getting the general meaning across. This may be the case particularly among students who do not see use of the target language as a necessary or vital part of their future. The other attitude is related to the first. Since students may have experienced a marked increase in their skills and therefore may believe that they are speakers of the language. In a linguistic sense they feel that they have arrived, thus signaling a decrease in their motivation to learn more.

Having discussed the changes in each of the three pre- and post measures of cultural sensitivity, oral language skills, and motivation what do these results tell us about the effects of short-term study abroad programs?

First, while gains were small, students did improve their ability to speak Spanish, became more culturally sensitive, and more motivated to learn the target language. These improvements suggest that short-term programs abroad, in this case approximately six weeks, can have a positive and measurable impact on students' learning. The overall success of the students in this short-term program is encouraging since over 50% of all students who go abroad participate in short-term programs (Open Doors, 2005).

However, this does not imply that short-term programs are better than or perhaps equal to long-term programs simply that short-term programs can contribute to learning in the areas that this study measured. This is especially encouraging for students who are unable to dedicate a long period of time to study abroad due to personal responsibilities, financial limitations, or other obstacles. Students who have a need to work to finance their education not only have the tuition and fees to be concerned about, but also the difficulty of leaving their employment for an extended period of time and losing the

income that they would have earned had they remained at home. In order to graduate in a timely fashion other students may need to be on campus during the winter and fall semesters. This is not to say that students cannot or should not pursue longer term study abroad options only that short term programs can provide a valuable experience for those who may not be able to participate otherwise.

This endorsement of short term programs should also be tempered by the fact that the gains made by most students were small. Also, students' learning would likely increase if students were able to stay for longer periods of time and it is likely that more students would demonstrate larger gains in these key areas of learning.

5.3 Predictors of Interaction with Native Speakers and Gains in Oral Language

The working hypotheses for this study were that interaction in the target language during study abroad would have a positive relationship with improvements in students' oral language skills. In addition, students' cultural sensitivity, relationship with the host family, and motivational intensity would positively predict interactive contact with native speakers in the target language and thus predict improvement in student's language skills.

In some ways these hypotheses were supported since some of the variables mentioned did predict students' interaction with native speakers and the gains students' experienced in oral language skills.

However, the underlying assumption that interaction with native speakers would drive students' growth in their linguistic skills was not borne out by the data.

The multiple regression which used students' gains in oral language skills as the criterion variable did not find that interaction was a significant predictor of changes in

students' oral skills. The only significant predictor of oral language skills was students' pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity. This provides support for earlier work on study abroad by such authors as Twombly (1995) and Wilkinson (1998a, 1998b). Their qualitative studies suggested that students' progress in language learning was impeded by cultural differences and that the students who were most willing and able to adapt to these cultural differences were the most successful in learning. They based their findings of observations of students who reacted either negatively or positively to cultural differences and either distanced themselves from native speakers or remained engaged with them. These studies provided a keen insight using qualitative methods, but stopped short of examining students' growth in the language to further solidify their conclusions. This study provides empirical support for the idea that students' who begin their time abroad with higher levels of cultural sensitivity tend to make more progress in learning the target language. However, this study does not support their supposition that lack of cultural sensitivity would lead to less interaction with native speakers and that less interaction would lead to decreased learning.

The idea that learning a 2nd/foreign language is enhanced by awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences is not entirely new. Schumann's acculturation theory takes a strong stance on the role of cultural factors, stating that if a student acculturates s/he will learn the language (Schumann, 1986). Also, Gardner's (1985) research on motivation holds that students of a given language tend to achieve more if they have an integrative orientation. This hints at the importance of accepting and becoming part of the target culture as an important part of the process of language learning.

Twombly (1993) and Wilkinson's (1998a, 1998b) work noted a deep sense of frustration and even anxiety among students who were unable or unwilling to accept and overcome cultural differences. From a cognitive perspective students who began their program with higher levels of cultural sensitivity experienced less frustration which allowed them to process the linguistic data that they come into contact with on a deeper level. Also, work on anxiety by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) suggests that anxiety can have a negative impact on language learning. Therefore, students who were particularly alarmed or upset by cultural differences may have experienced too much anxiety, which decreased their ability to learn the target language while abroad.

While pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity predicted gains in oral language skills, interaction with native speakers did not. This is perplexing given that respected theories and research second language acquisition affirms that in learning a 2nd/foreign language interaction is crucial. Common sense would indicate that if a student spends more time interacting with native speakers then s/he would have more opportunity to progress in the language. Also, study abroad programs' popularity is at least partially due to the belief that students who go abroad will have the opportunity to interact with native speakers and will thus improve their skills in the language (Mendelson, 2004). However, the study abroad research indicates only partial support for this supposition (Segalowitz and Freed, 2004, Yager, 1998).

There are several possible reasons that interaction with native speakers was not significantly related to changes in students' oral skills. One is that the types of interactions that students have during study abroad can be repetitive. For example, students may frequently request basic necessities or make certain transactions such as

purchasing a bus ticket or engaging in other brief and superficial exchanges. Some practitioners of study abroad find that students are not often asked to perform linguistic tasks that reach beyond the intermediate level of the ACTFL guidelines. If this is the case then simply having more of these kinds of interactions will probably not provide the challenge that students need to improve their skills. The results of this study may be indicating that interaction that is repetitive or simple does not predict gains in oral language skills.

Another explanation may be that students interact on a regular basis, but are not required to speak very much. While abroad, students are easily recognized as the foreigners that they are and it seems likely that native speakers would quickly recognize that the students lack fluency in the target language. This being the case, native speakers may take up the slack in conversations and knowing that students may have difficulty with the language ask them to respond only to simple questions.

This may also explain why students' ratings of their relationship with their host families did not predict language learning either. A host family may be very inviting and cordial without requiring much from the student linguistically. This seems especially likely in the case of families who have regularly taken in foreign students. Family members may be accustomed to students who do not possess high levels of proficiency and consequently lower their expectations for what kinds of conversations they would ask the student to participate in. This could happen even though the family is open and warm to the student and even invites them to participate in family activities.

Additionally a host family and the student could get along quite well even though the student spends little time in the home or with the family. In such a situation, a

students' rating of their relationship with the host family would be very positive, but since contact with them was minimal the positive score would have little bearing on the student's growth in the target language.

It was also surprising that motivation did not predict gains in oral language skills. The multiple regression which used the amount of time students spent interacting with native speakers of Spanish as its criterion variable showed that only pre-program levels of motivation significantly predicted students' interaction with native speakers. Interestingly though, students' level of motivation did not significantly predict gains in students' oral skills, despite research in other contexts suggesting that motivation is one of the most powerful predictors of achievement in learning 2nd/foreign languages (Gardner & Masgoret, 2003). This leaves the question of why motivation did not predict improvement in oral skills.

One possible reason is that students' motivation was reasonably high to begin with. The median score for motivation to learn Spanish before going abroad was approximately 29 on a scale of 36. While it is possible that the scores could have been higher, this seems to reflect a generally high level of motivation as students began the program, after all these students have already self-selected to go abroad. What may be happening is that in an already highly motivated group students can have relatively average motivation compared to others and still be sufficiently motivated to take advantage of opportunities to learn while abroad.

It may be helpful to consider the connections between the regression, which examined possible predictors of interaction with native speakers and the regression which looked at possible predictors of gains in oral language skills. As stated previously, only

students' initial level of motivation predicted the amount of time that students spent interacting with native speakers while abroad. Also, students who began their time abroad with higher levels of cultural sensitivity tended to make greater progress in the language than those who began with less cultural sensitivity. This means that not only is interaction not a predictor of gains in oral language skills, but interaction and gains in language skills do not share any predictors. This further highlights the lack of connection between interaction and gains in oral language skills. It also suggests a possible scenario in which students who are more motivated to learn Spanish interact with native speakers more than less motivated students, but those who are more culturally sensitive tend to make more progress linguistically even though they report spending somewhat less time interacting with native speakers. Perhaps this also indicates that students who are culturally sensitive engaged in different kinds of interactions than students' who were less culturally sensitive to begin with.

5.4 PREDICTORS OF GAINS IN CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Improving students' ability to interact successfully with people from other cultures has long been considered a goal of study abroad (Day, 1987). Because of this, a portion of this study was dedicated to understanding what precipitates students' growth in cultural sensitivity. Among the predictors used in the analysis, only one was a significant predictor of the changes students experienced in cultural sensitivity, interaction with native speakers.

The fact that interaction with native speakers predicted gains in cultural sensitivity was not surprising since it seems unlikely that cultural sensitivity would

develop without contact with another culture. What was surprising is the curvilinear nature of the relationship between cultural sensitivity and interaction. These results indicated that as students interacted more their cultural sensitivity also improved. However, at the top of the curve the pattern started to reverse and showed that students who had spent the very most time interacting with native speakers actually experienced less improvement in their cultural sensitivity than students who had interacted somewhat less. What this may be saying is that there is an optimal amount of interaction with members of the target culture for students to have while abroad. This could be for two reasons. One, there is only so much time in the day and there could come a point where a student becomes fatigued or uninterested and stops processing their experience. Similarly, students may occasionally need small amounts of time away from the target culture while abroad on a regular basis to digest the meaning of their information.

Wilkinson (1998b) seems to agree that students need some time with other students and/or away from the stresses of dealing with the new culture. One student in her study commented on the importance of her friendships with other students from her home culture stating, "If I hadn't formed the friendships that I did, I don't know what I would have done—curled up in my room or something." Another stated that she "didn't see how it could be any other way" and felt that speaking with same culture friends abroad was "a relief" and that for the time she was there spending time occasionally speaking English was "a pretty good balance."

The comments of these students taken with the results of this study suggest that there is a balance to be struck in the amount of time spent with people from the home culture and time spent negotiating the target culture. Apparently, some amount of time

spent in a less culturally demanding setting provides a sort of cultural release valve, and could allow students to process their experiences and reach a higher level of cultural sensitivity than they would if they simply remained in the target culture at every moment.

In a way, the relationship between interaction and gains in cultural sensitivity may point to an indirect link between interaction and oral language skills. The only predictor of oral language skills was pre-program levels of cultural sensitivity, and the only predictor of gains in cultural sensitivity was the amount of interaction with native speakers that students engaged in while abroad. It is plausible then that students' interaction with native speakers was paving the way for them to improve their oral language skills by helping them to become more culturally sensitive.

It is also interesting to note that a student's relationship with his or her host family was not a predictor of changes in cultural sensitivity. A scenario could be in play where families who frequently host American students are accustomed to the idiosyncrasies and cultural differences that commonly surface. Having spent much more time generally with Americans than the students are likely to have spent with Argentines the host family may have become acculturated on some level. For example, they may adjust meal times or prepare special foods or do any number of things based on their experience with members of the students' culture. If this indeed takes place, it is possible that the host family would in a sense act less like a member of the target culture than if they had never hosted an American student previously. Consequently, the students may not have to adjust as much to a new culture as they would in a home where the family was unaccustomed to the cultural mores of American college students.

It is also possible that the host family setting can mimic students' home life. This program and others to some extent make an effort to match students with families that have similar interests and backgrounds and that are willing to meet any special needs that a given student might have. Additionally, the families that students stay with are tend to be middle class and educated, a background similar to that of the families of most students who go abroad. All of these factors could mean that the host family setting is more familiar and less culturally demanding than other settings in which the students could find themselves. As a result, a student's relationship with his or her host family is not a significant predictor of gains in cultural sensitivity.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

While making some valuable contributions to the body of study abroad research, this study also has some obvious limitations.

First, the study measures improvement in only one of the four linguistic skills, oral production. Since, students abroad may not be required to speak as much as listen, listening skills may improve more than speaking skills. Therefore, it would be important to measure students' changes in listening skills during a short-term program. In fact, it would be interesting to see which of the four skills improve the most during short-term programs. This would provide a richer picture of the changes students experience in their linguistic skills during their time abroad. Measuring changes in all four skills would also provide an opportunity to perform a similar regression analysis to determine if any of the variables that were not significant predictors of speaking were significant predictors of one of the other skills.

Also, it is difficult to accept that interaction with native speakers was not a significant predictor, given the abundance of research indicating the contrary. This indicates a need for more research regarding the types of interaction that occur in study abroad and how these relate to language learning. This research could begin by examining the kinds of interactions that students tend to have with native speakers, which would then lay the foundation for understanding what kinds of interactions are most beneficial. This could provide insights for those who plan and administer study abroad programs about how to engender the most meaningful interactions for language learning.

Also, future research could investigate the relationship between interaction with native speakers and students' growth in cultural sensitivity. This study revealed a curvilinear relationship, but the design does not lend itself to explaining why or how it exists. Future research could examine the ways students spend their time when they are not interacting with native speakers or in the classroom to determine how those activities affect the changes students experience in cultural sensitivity. This could be achieved through qualitative study, perhaps the use of multiple case studies using comparative analysis across cases. Interviews and observations with students who notched high gains as well as students who made low gains would provide an explanation that a likert scale cannot capture. This would provide insights about how students change as well as deepen our understanding of what changes took place.

The survey of host family relationship could also be manipulated to become more specific in asking about the kinds of activities that students took part in with the family and perhaps quantify the amount of time spent with members of the host family. Also there could be more specific questions about language use that would provide more

insight into what kinds of tasks students are required to use when interacting with their host family. These changes may help to alleviate the ceiling effect that occurred in the current study. Additionally, interviews with the host families and the students who stayed with them would be helpful to determine if the idea that families who host students tend to cater to the culture of the students and decrease the students' exposure to the target culture.

5.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

The results of this study reinforce the importance of teaching culture in the 2nd/foreign language classroom, because according to this study, students who are more culturally sensitive will tend to progress more quickly in their linguistic proficiency as well. However, this teaching must go beyond learning facts about countries where the target language is spoken. Students may also need to come to terms with cultural differences, recognize similarities and find ways to overcome the difficulties inherent in cross-cultural interaction. These encouragements fit nicely with the standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. These standards maintain that students should gain "an understanding of the . . . . perspectives of the culture studied (1999)."

Since interaction with native speakers in Spanish was a significant predictor of gains in cultural sensitivity it seems logical for teachers to encourage students to seek opportunities to interact with members of the target culture. Community events, language exchanges with international students or service-learning programs where students have contact with members of the target culture could aid students in developing

their cultural sensitivity. It would also be reasonable for teachers to find ways for students to reflect on their experiences through journaling, discussions or reports. For example, recent studies have documented that students who perform ethnographic interviews with native speakers of the target language and write about their findings experience great benefits (Bateman, 2004). Such activities can provide avenues for students to gain cultural sensitivity which would then lead to more language learning.

5.7 Implications for Program Administrators in Study Abroad

The findings of this research have several implications for those who plan and administer study abroad programs. First, since many students made only small gains or even showed a decrease in their language skills and cultural sensitivity, program administrators may need to rethink how study abroad programs are structured. This may indicate that students need help in having meaningful interactions that lead them to develop in these areas. One program in France requires students to participate in at least two types of organizations in the community. Students choose to participate in a club or team related to a hobby of the student, and a community service group (Engle, L., & Engle, J., 2003). For example, one student loved volleyball and joined a community team full of native French speakers and volunteered at a soup kitchen working with other French speakers.

Such activities provide a different kind of interaction with locals than most study abroad students' experience. These types of activities create an entrée for the student since the student and the native speakers share a common purpose or interest. Also, these types of interactions are in a sense more authentic. When a student abroad approaches a

native speaker in a social setting or in a public place the students' goal is generally to have a conversation in the target language in order to learn the language, this can result in a recreation of the classroom where the native speaker plays the role of teacher and the student continues in the role of learner (Wilkinson, 1998b). On the other hand, in the above examples, students want to learn the language, but perhaps have more of an opportunity to do so because there is a real goal to accomplish through the language in addition to language learning.

Another important implication of this study is that administrators in study abroad programs need to prepare students to overcome the cultural difficulties that students may face when they go abroad. The findings of this study suggest that cultural sensitivity precipitates language learning. These findings highlight the need for students to be prepared for the challenging cultural experience that awaits them. Study abroad programs will often provide some kind of preparation for their students before going abroad. This study underscores the importance of such preparation and even suggests making such training more extensive. Doing so would help students to have a more enjoyable experience, but could possibly improve students' language learning.

Also, given the challenges that students face in adapting to their new culture, program administrators may need to provide some way to assist students in processing their experiences. Those who design or coordinate programs abroad could ask students to come to an informal class meeting at regular intervals where students are guided in a discussion of their experiences. Another option would be to encourage students to keep a reflection journal where they write regularly about their experiences with a focus on their understanding of similarities and differences in the way of life that they are encountering.

Hopefully such suggestions will help more study abroad students to satisfy their hunger for meaningful cultural and linguistic learning through their sojourn abroad.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1 – INSTRUMENTS

Appendix 1a – Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity

Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity

Instructions to Students:

THIS SECTION PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CULTURAL ATTITUDES. PLEASE BE AS SINCERE AND ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE. IT IS *VITAL* THAT YOU ANSWER *ALL* OF THE QUESTIONS IN ORDER FOR THE TEST TO BE A USEFUL MEASUREMENT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION.

1. I speak only one language.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

2. The way other people express themselves is very interesting to me.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

3. I enjoy being with people from other cultures.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

4. Foreign influence in our country threatens our national identity.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

5. Others' feelings rarely influence decisions I make.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

6. I cannot eat with chopsticks.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

7. I avoid people who are different from me.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

8. It is better that people from other cultures avoid one another.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

9. Culturally mixed marriages are wrong.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

10. I think people are basically alike.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

11. I have never lived outside my own culture for any great length of time.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

12. I have foreigners over to my home on a regular basis.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

13. It makes me nervous to talk about people who are different than me.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

14. I enjoy studying about people from other cultures.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

15. People from other cultures do things differently because they do not know any other way.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

16. There is usually more than one good way to get things done.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

17. I listen to music from another culture on a regular basis.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

18. I decorate my home or room with artifacts from other countries.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

19. I feel uncomfortable when in a crowd of people.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

20. The very existence of humanity depends upon our knowledge about other people.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

21. Residential neighborhoods should be culturally separated.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

22. I have many friends.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

23. I dislike eating foods from other cultures.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

24. I think about living within another culture in the future.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

25. Moving into another culture would be easy.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

26. I like to discuss issues with people from other cultures.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

27. There should be tighter controls on the number of immigrants allowed into my country.

Strongly Disagree1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

28. The more I know about people, the more I dislike them.

Strongly Disagree1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

29. I read more national news than international news in the daily newspaper.

Strongly Disagree1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

30. Crowds of foreigners frighten me.

Strongly Disagree1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

31. When something newsworthy happens I seek out someone from that part of the world to discuss the issue with.

Strongly Disagree1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Strongly Agree**

32. I eat ethnic foods at least twice a week.

Strongly Disagree1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Appendix 1b – Oral Language Tasks

Instructions for Oral Language Tasks read to the student by the researcher:

Remember there are no wrong or right answers. This is an opportunity to show your ability to speak Spanish. Speaking less in order to make fewer mistakes will not help your performance. Try to always say as much as you can, speak, as well as you can and show what you can do.

Item 1

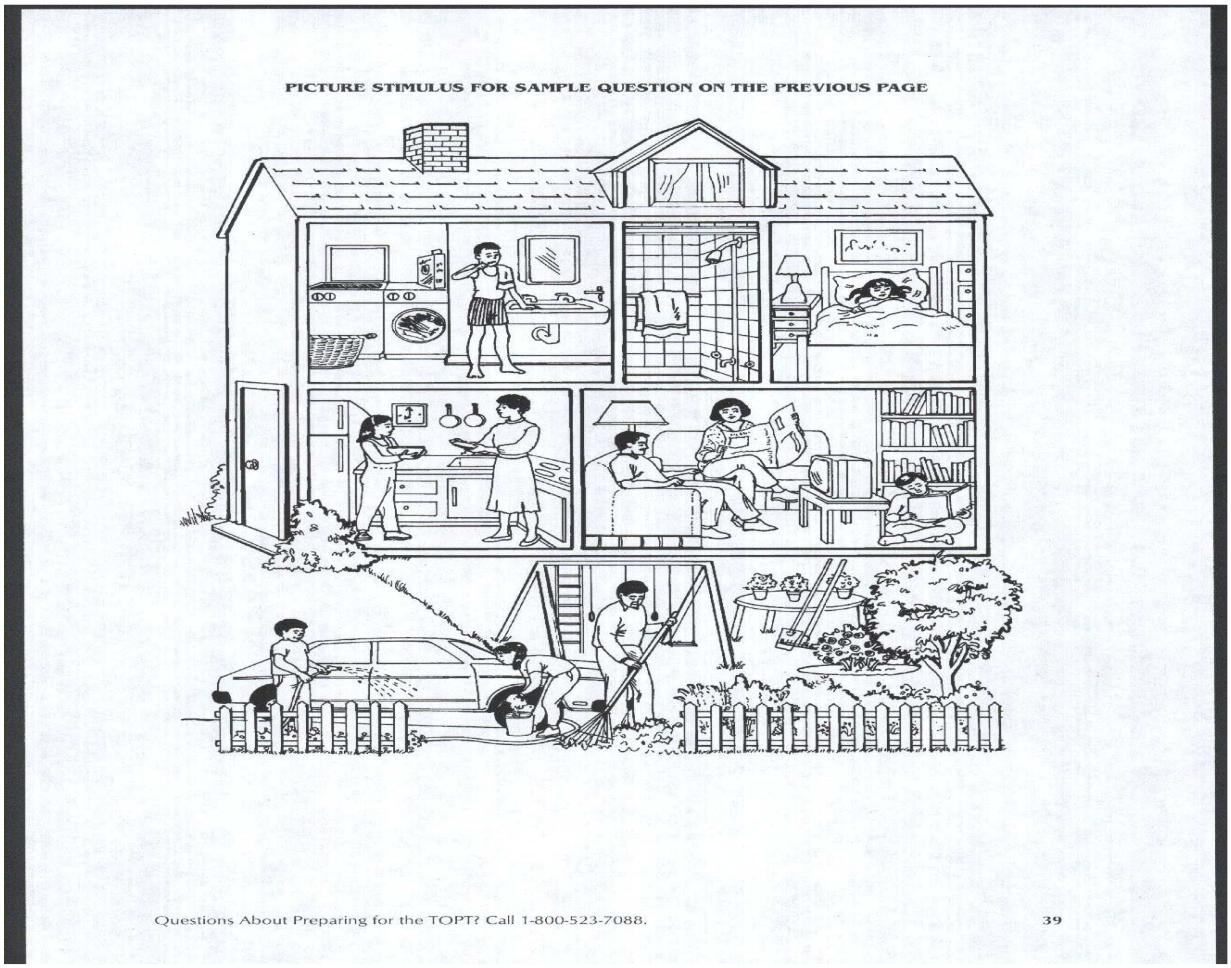
Imagine that you are at a friend's home in Argentina for dinner. You find yourself in a conversation where people are describing their homes. Your friend Pablo asks you to describe the home you grew up in. You may use the picture and your own experience or imagination as sources for what to say. You will have 15 seconds to think about your answer and 1 minute 20 seconds to respond. Do not proceed to Item 2 until you are instructed to do so.

Item 2

You missed an important exam in an important class and are now speaking to the professor/teacher. Explain, what happened and try to arrange for a make-up exam. You will have 20 seconds to think about your answer and 1 minute 30 seconds to respond.

Thanks for your time and participation!

Appendix 1c – Prompt for oral Language Task 1



Appendix 1d- Test of Oral Language Skills Rubric

	1	2	3	4	5
Pronunciation	heavily accented speech with obvious interference from speakers first lang.	less heavily accented speech, still much interference from first lang.	consistent use of sound system of target language even with errors	expert level of pronunciation with little interference from 1st language	highest level of pronunciation, very little interference from 1st language
Grammar	Typically misuses basic structural elements	correctly uses basic structures, but still irregular, may also lack knowledge of structures necessary to complete task easily	Correctly uses high frequency structures, some facility with complex structures	Consistently correct use of basic and complex structures, small errors still present	nearly perfect agreement of gender, number, aspect, Proper use of complex structures
Fluency	Completely halting, hesitant, speaks with great dificulty	very halting, hesitant & fragmentary far from smooth	Fairly halting, sometimes smooth & Fluid	very smooth and fluid	Completely smooth/fluid
Comprehensibility	Fully incomprehensible, only occassional words	reasonably comprehensible, understand most sentences	completely comprehensible		
Vocabulary	Nearly unable to complete task due to lack of vocabulary knowledge	Task difficult to complete b/c of lack of vocab. Some simple vocab present	adequate, may still lack some words for the topic or unecessary repetition	Very adequate, though range limited or slightly odd word choice	rich and varied, excellent word choice

Appendix 1e – Language Contact Profile

Name: **Email address:**

Thank you for participating in this study. You are helping to make study abroad more effective for future participants. This survey contains 5 sections, language experience, language contact profile, motivation, cultural attitudes and host family questionnaire. Please complete each section and each question in each section.

The responses that you give in this questionnaire will be kept confidential. This cover sheet is to allow the researcher to associate your responses with your name if needed.

However, only the person entering your responses into the computer will see your name. The information that you provide will help us to better understand the learning experiences of students of Spanish. Your honest and detailed responses will be greatly appreciated! ☺

Language Experience

Please indicate the Spanish language courses you took during your summer abroad:
Course names:_____ Session: ___1 ___2

Have you ever participated in a study abroad program previously? ___Yes ___No
If yes where and for how long?_____

Have you ever traveled or lived abroad for an extended period of time for a purpose other than a study abroad program? ___Yes ___No
If yes where and for how long?_____

Was Spanish spoken in your home as a child, even if only occasionally by a relative or visitors?_____

Have you studied or do you speak a language other than English or Spanish?
___Yes ___No If yes where and for how long? _____

How many semesters have you studied Spanish at any level?
1 2 3 4 5 6 More than 6

Prior to your study abroad this summer, when had you taken your last Spanish class?
Year:_____ Semester: ___Fall ___Spring ___Summer

Language Contact Profile

1. Which situation best describes your living arrangements while in Argentina?
   a. __ lived in the home of a Spanish-speaking family.
      i. List the members of the family (e.g., mother, father, one 4-year-old daughter, one 13-year-old son)
      _____
      ii. Did they speak English? Circle one: Yes No
      iii. Were there other nonnative speakers of Spanish living with your host family? Circle one: Yes No
   b.__ I lived in the student dormitory.
      i. I had a private room.
      ii. I had a roommate who was a native or fluent Spanish speaker.
      iii. I lived with others who are NOT native or fluent Spanish speakers.
   c. __ I lived alone in a room or an apartment.
   d. __ I lived in a room or an apartment with native or fluent Spanish speakers.
   e. __ I lived in a room or an apartment with others who are NOT native or fluent Spanish speakers.
   f.__ Other. Please specify:_____

For the following items, please specify:
How many ***days per week*** you typically used Spanish in the situation indicated and on average how many ***hours per day*** you did so. Circle the appropriate numbers.

2. On average, how much time did you spend speaking, *in Spanish*, outside of class with native or fluent Spanish speakers while abroad?
   Typically, how many *days per week*?
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
      0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

3. While abroad, outside of class, I tried to speak *Spanish to*:
   a. my instructor
      Typically, how many *days per week*?
         1 2 3 4 5 6 7
      On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
         0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5
   b. friends who are native or fluent Spanish speakers
      Typically, how many *days per week*?
         1 2 3 4 5 6 7
      On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
         0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5
   c. classmates
      Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

d. strangers whom I thought could speak Spanish

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

e. a host family, Spanish roommate, or other Spanish speakers in the dormitory

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

f. service personnel

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

g. other; specify:_____

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

4. How often did you use Spanish outside the classroom for each of the following purposes?

a. to clarify classroom-related work

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

b. to obtain directions or information
(e.g., "Where is the post office?", "What time is the train to . . . ?", "How much are stamps?")

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

c. for superficial or brief exchanges
(e.g., greetings, "Please pass the salt," "I'm leaving," ordering in a restaurant) with my host family, Spanish roommate or acquaintances in a Spanish-speaking dormitory.

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

d. extended conversations with my host family, Spanish roommate, friends or acquaintances in a Spanish-speaking dormitory, native speakers of English with whom I speak Spanish.

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

5. How often did you try deliberately to use things you were taught in the classroom (grammar, vocabulary, expressions) with native or fluent speakers outside the classroom?

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

6. How much time did you spend doing the following *each week*?

a. speaking a language other than English or Spanish to speakers of that language (e.g., Chinese with a Chinese-speaking friend)

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

b. speaking *Spanish* to native or fluent speakers of *Spanish*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

c. speaking *English* to native or fluent speakers of *Spanish*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

d. speaking *Spanish* to nonnative speakers of *Spanish* i.e., classmates!

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

e. speaking *English* to nonnative speakers of *Spanish* i.e., classmates

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

f. speaking *Spanish* to a language exchange partner from the university in Cordoba.

(If you did not participate in the language exchange program mark N/A below)
N/A
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

7. How much time did you spend doing each of the following activities *outside of class*?

a. overall, in reading in Spanish *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

b. reading Spanish newspapers *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

c. reading novels in Spanish *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

d. reading Spanish language magazines *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

e. reading schedules, announcements, menus and the like in Spanish *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

f. reading e-mail or Internet web pages in Spanish *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?
0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

g. overall, in listening to Spanish *outside of class*
Typically, how many *days per week*?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

h. listening to Spanish television and radio *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

i. listening to Spanish movies or videos *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

j. listening to Spanish songs *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

k. trying to catch other people's conversations in Spanish *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

l. overall, in writing in Spanish *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

m. writing homework assignments in Spanish *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

n. writing personal notes or letters in Spanish *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

o. writing e-mail in Spanish *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

p. filling in forms or questionnaires in Spanish *outside of class*

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

8. On average, how much time did you spend speaking in *English* outside of class while abroad?

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

9. How often did you do the following activities in *English* during your time in Argentina?

a. reading newspapers, magazines or novels or watching movies, television or videos

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

b. reading e-mail or Internet web pages in English

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

c. writing e-mail in English

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

d. writing personal notes and letters in English

Typically, how many *days per week*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many *hours per day*?

0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Interaction variable = Questions 2, 3a,b,d,e,f,g, 4a,b,c,d, 5, 6b,f

Appendix 1f – Survey of Motivational Intensity
Motivation to learn Spanish

Name:_____ Date: _____
(Last) (First)

This section provides information about your motivation to learn Spanish. Please be as sincere and accurate as possible. It is vital that you answer *ALL* of the questions in order for the test to be a useful measurement of motivation. Thank you for your time and attention!

1. I make a point of trying to understand all the Spanish I see and hear.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

2. I learn Spanish by working on it almost every day.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

3. When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in a Spanish class, I always try to find the answer. (Think back to your most recent class)

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

4. I really work hard to learn Spanish.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

5. When I am learning Spanish, I ignore distractions and stick to the job at hand.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

6. I intend to improve my Spanish as much as I can.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

7. Being a person who knows Spanish is important to me.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

8. I am willing to dedicate time and effort to learning Spanish even if it is not convenient.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

9. I will not stop trying to learn until I have reached I reach the skill level in Spanish that I seek.

   1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

Appendix 1g – Host Family Relationship

Host Family Questionnaire
This section of the survey is designed to understand the host family that you stayed with while abroad.

1. My host family and I got along very well

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

2. My host family made an effort to involve me in their activities.

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

3. My host family was patient with any difficulties I had in communicating

in Spanish.

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

4. My host family helped me get used to the way things are done in

Argentina.

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

5. My host family helped me feel comfortable in their home.

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

6. My host family encouraged me to speak Spanish with them.

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

7. My host family liked to hear what I had to say.

1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 agree 4 strongly agree

Appendix 1h-Participant Consent Form

Title: Speaking of culture Internal Review Board # [redacted]
Conducted By: Rob Martinsen of University of Texas at Austin: College of Education
Department; Curriculum and Instruction Telephone: XXX-XXX-XXXX email: xxxxx@xxxxx

Faculty Sponsor: Zena Moore Ph.D. of University of Texas at Austin: College of Education
Department; Curriculum and Instruction Telephone: XXX-XXX-XXXX email: xxxxx@xxxxx

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current for future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. Upon request, the researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this study is to **understand the effectiveness of study abroad programs; approximately 60-100 students will participate.**

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Before and after your time abroad,
- complete a survey regarding cultural attitudes and study abroad,
- provide a brief assessment of your language skills including an audio recording which will be heard at a later date by a panel of native speakers. These native speakers of Spanish will include some graduate or undergraduate students from UT Austin, as well as non-student native speakers of Spanish drawn from the Austin area. The members of this panel will have no access to identifiable information regarding any of the participants in this study.
- It is possible that you will be contacted for further information such as an interview, focus group or follow up survey.

Total estimated time to participate: approximately one and a half hours before going abroad and one and a half hours after.

Risks of being in the study: The risk associated with this study is no greater than everyday life. Your participation in this survey will in ***no way*** affect your participation in study abroad programs nor will it be used in ***any way*** to evaluate you academically or otherwise.

Benefits of being in the study

- You will provide important insights into how study abroad can be a more effective learning tool.
- You will also be able to understand more clearly your own attitudes and perceptions of your experience abroad.

Compensation: None

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

- The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it or with your participation in any study.
- Specifically,

  **interviews, group discussions or language assessments may be audio or videotaped;*
  **all recordings will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them;*
  **all recordings will be kept in a secure place (e.g., a locked file cabinet in the investigator's office);*
  **all recordings will be heard or viewed only for research or educational purposes*
  **to make possible future analysis the investigator will retain the recordings*

The **records** of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Institutional Review Board and (study sponsors, if any) have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the **confidentiality** of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

We may wish to present some of the tapes from this study at scientific conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to do so with your tape.
I hereby give permission for the audio tape made for this research study to also be used for educational purposes.

_____
Date:_____
signature of participant

Contacts and Questions: If you have any questions about the study, please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns or questions about the research please contact [redacted], Ph.D., Chair of The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, xxx-xxx-xxxx or email: xxxxx@xxxxx ***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***
Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent _____Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

Information Sheet
In order to coordinate your participation, please legibly provide the following information:

Name: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
Summer Phone for after you return (if different from above): _____

Which session will you attend? _____ first session, _____ second session, _____ both first and second

As explained previously, you will need to take a follow up test as soon as possible after returning from Argentina. What day will you return from Argentina? _____.

Will you be returning to campus immediately after the program ____ Yes, ____ No

If not where will you return to after you finish the program _____(city, state)? and
What is the soonest date that you will be on campus after the program_____?

Thank you again for your participation! ☺

Appendix 1i-Cultural Sensitivity Results

Table A – Cultural Sensitivity Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics-Cultural Sensitivity

		PreTotalCult_Sens	PostTotalCult_Sens
N	Valid	58	50
	Missing	82	90
Mean		166.91	171.24
Median		169.00	172.00
Mode		156(a)	158(a)
Std. Deviation		13.356	13.903
Variance		178.396	193.288
Skewness		-.208	-.035
Std. Error of Skewness		.314	.337
Kurtosis		.372	-.748
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.618	.662
Minimum		137	142
Maximum		200	198

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Paired Samples Statistics-Cultural Sensitivity

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTotalCult_Sens	166.35	48	14.111	2.037
	PostTotalCult_Sens	171.54	48	14.059	2.029

Cultural Sensitivity Paired Samples T-Test, Variables: Pre-Cult Sens., Post-Cult Sens.

Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
-5.267	9.134	1.362	-8.011	-2.523	-3.868	44	.000

Appendix 1j-Oral Language Skills Results

Table B – Oral Language Skills

Descriptive Statistics-Oral Language Skills

		PreLangMean	PostLangMean
N	Valid	45	45
	Missing	0	0
Mean		2.4667	2.7733
Median		2.4500	2.8000
Mode		2.45(a)	2.80
Std. Deviation		.32281	.44564
Variance		.104	.199
Skewness		-.861	.512
Std. Error of Skewness		.354	.354
Kurtosis		2.931	.945
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.695	.695
Minimum		1.30	1.80
Maximum		3.20	4.10

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Oral Language Skills – Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreLangMean	2.4667	45	.32281	.04812
	PostLangMean	2.7733	45	.44564	.06643

Oral Language Skills – Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
-.306	.35812	.05339	-.41426	-.19908	-5.744	44	.000

Appendix 1k-Motivational Intensity Results

Table C – Motivational Intensity

Descriptive Statistics-Motivational Intensity

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-motivation	45	20	36	29.31	3.842
Post-motivation	45	21	36	30.47	3.969
Gains-motivation	45	-6.00	8.00	1.1556	3.12581

Paired Samples Statistics-Motivational Intensity

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-motivation	29.31	45	3.842	.573
	Post-motivation	30.47	45	3.969	.592

Motivational Intensity – Paired Samples Test, Variables: Pre-motivation, Post-Motivation

Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
-1.156	3.126	.466	-2.095	-.216	-2.480	44	.017

Appendix 1l-Interaction with Native Speakers

Interaction with Native Speakers in the Target Language

Mean	128.2722
Median	126.0000
Mode	109.50(a)
Std. Deviation	54.41206
Variance	2960.672
Skewness	.668
Std. Error of Skewness	.354
Kurtosis	.939
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.695
Range	266.50
Minimum	27.00
Maximum	293.50

a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Interaction with Native Speakers in the Target Language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	27.00	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	29.00	1	2.2	2.2	4.4
	51.00	1	2.2	2.2	6.7
	53.00	1	2.2	2.2	8.9
	66.50	1	2.2	2.2	11.1
	71.50	1	2.2	2.2	13.3
	74.00	1	2.2	2.2	15.6
	81.50	1	2.2	2.2	17.8
	87.50	1	2.2	2.2	20.0
	89.30	1	2.2	2.2	22.2
	89.50	1	2.2	2.2	24.4
	90.50	1	2.2	2.2	26.7
	103.00	1	2.2	2.2	28.9
	104.25	1	2.2	2.2	31.1
	104.50	1	2.2	2.2	33.3
	105.50	1	2.2	2.2	35.6
	108.50	1	2.2	2.2	37.8
	109.50	2	4.4	4.4	42.2
	125.00	1	2.2	2.2	44.4
	125.50	1	2.2	2.2	46.7
	125.75	1	2.2	2.2	48.9
	126.00	1	2.2	2.2	51.1
	126.10	1	2.2	2.2	53.3
	127.30	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
	130.00	1	2.2	2.2	57.8
	131.50	2	4.4	4.4	62.2
	132.50	2	4.4	4.4	66.7
	133.00	1	2.2	2.2	68.9
	144.00	1	2.2	2.2	71.1
	145.00	1	2.2	2.2	73.3
	146.50	1	2.2	2.2	75.6
	162.00	1	2.2	2.2	77.8
	166.00	1	2.2	2.2	80.0
	175.50	1	2.2	2.2	82.2
	182.50	1	2.2	2.2	84.4
	189.00	1	2.2	2.2	86.7
	190.55	1	2.2	2.2	88.9
	204.50	1	2.2	2.2	91.1
	218.00	1	2.2	2.2	93.3
	224.50	1	2.2	2.2	95.6
	229.00	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	293.50	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

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Vita

Rob Martinsen was born on July 15th, 1975 in Wood Dale, Illinois, United States of America to Rick and Julie Martinsen. Rob attended Westwood High School where he graduated in 1993. During high school Rob was involved in student government, track and field, and the Spanish club. After high school Rob attended Mesa Community College in Mesa, AZ for one year where he participated in the honors program. At age nineteen Rob was called to serve as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints spending two years in Madrid, Spain sharing the message of the restored gospel, serving in the community and gaining fluency in the Spanish tongue. This experience had a profound impact on his spirituality and piqued his interest in learning about languages and cultures. Upon returning home Rob resumed his studies and graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a minor in Business in December of 1999. At that point he worked for an Internet startup company for a year and began to pursue an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language through Northern Arizona University. While pursuing his Master's degree Rob also taught Adult ESL courses through Rio Salado Community College. In the Fall of 2003 Rob began doctoral studies in Foreign Language Education at the University of Texas at Austin. During his doctoral studies Rob co-authored a book chapter on teacher research, published an article comparing two university level language programs, presented at conferences and received the Bruton Continuing Fellowship. Rob has also accepted a position as assistant professor of Spanish Pedagogy in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University.

Permanent address: 514 E. Cluff Lane Mesa, AZ 85203

This dissertation was typed by the author.